

Introduction to the Modern Middle East
History 139
University of Wisconsin-Madison, Fall 2020

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This course traces the formation of the states and societies that compose the contemporary Middle East. How have global phenomena, including two world wars, the Cold War, women's movements, and modern science, technology, and fossil fuels, affected the politics, culture, and daily lives of Middle Eastern people? What is Islamism, and how should we explain its influence? Why has the United States had such a troubled relationship with this part of the world? The course balances a generally thematic approach with several weeks of country-specific studies, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, and Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Overview

Learning Objectives

Students completing this course will be able to:

- Identify the origins of the Middle East nation-states;
- Compare the larger Middle East nation-states in terms of politics, economy, and society;
- Analyze trends in the development of U.S. relations with the Middle East;
- Explain the modern Middle East in terms of global processes of change;
- Use *primary sources* to support all of the above.

Course Materials

You will access course readings and other materials in the following ways:

- Buy, rent, or borrow: James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History*, 4th ed. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016).
 - Available from many booksellers and on reserve in College Library (Helen C. White).
 - I encourage you to use the fourth edition of Gelvin's textbook. Page numbers are mostly the same in earlier editions, but the fourth edition is more up-to-date. It is not necessary to get the fifth edition, which is more expensive.
- Find on Canvas, in modules: all other assigned readings, occasional assigned films, and supplementary materials.
- *All assignments will be posted and turned in on Canvas.*

Virtual Office Hours

We welcome your questions and ideas about course content and assignments. We are also glad to speak to you about your broader interests in the Middle East or in History. Office hours are also a good time to discuss any challenges you are facing in the course. In accordance with campus policy this semester, all office hours will be virtual.

PROF. STOLZ: Tuesdays 1-2pm, Thursdays 11am-12pm, via WebEx link on course website.

TA ANDREW KELLY: Fridays 1-3pm, via BBCollaborate Ultra link on course website.

Note: WebEx and BBCollaborate Ultra offer a dial-in option so that you can talk to us from your phone if you are unable to connect from your computer. You will find the dial-in numbers next to the relevant link on the course website.

Explanation of credit hours

This 4-credit course meets as a group for 4 hours per week. (According to UW-Madison's credit hour policy, each 50-minute class counts as one hour.) The course also carries the expectation that you will spend an average of at least 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of at least 8 hours per week for reading, writing, and preparing for discussions.

Course Rhythm

The lecture component of this course is offered asynchronously, which offers you a certain amount of flexibility to decide when to complete some of the course elements. Nevertheless, it is useful to think of the course as having a “rhythm,” by which certain tasks repeat during the week and across the semester. Understanding the course rhythm will help you structure your time and keep up with the course at a reasonable pace.

Note: a visualization of the course rhythm is available on Canvas, under the welcome module.

Each week of the course includes the following components:

Lectures, recorded by Prof. Stolz: usually there will be three 30-minute videos per week, which you may view at a time convenient to you. However, each lecture has an associated “exit slip,” a one-sentence assignment, which is typically due at the end of the day on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday. The exit slips ensure that you are keeping up with the course, and they alert me to any serious misunderstandings of the lecture material. *Please post your questions about lecture content in the weekly Questions Discussion Board, so that other students can learn from them.* (Email the professor or TA with questions that pertain to your individual circumstances.)

Discussion Section: led by TA Andrew Kelly, these sections meet either in-person or online on Thursday, at a time for which you have registered. Prepare for discussion section by completing weekly readings and/or films, and by synthesizing these materials with the lectures. More information on preparing for section will be provided by your TA.

A “closer look” assignment: most weeks of the course (weeks 3-11, except week 6) include a “closer look” reading, which provides a more in-depth exploration of a specific topic than is available in the lectures, textbook, or other course materials. A one-page response to a question about this reading is due at the end of the day on Sunday. You do NOT need to prepare to discuss these readings in section.

Occasional assignments: in addition to the course’s weekly components, you will complete an orientation quiz, one “timeline editor” assignment during a week of your choosing, one midterm essay, and two final assignments.

For more information on assignments, see “Assessment,” on the next page.

Assessment

Components of Course Grade

Orientation Quiz (3%), due Sunday, September 6th, at 11:59pm: This semester is so different from others that I want to be extra sure you understand the course expectations and mechanics before we get started. The orientation quiz is available for infinite re-take and is therefore also an easy way for you to earn a little credit in the course.

Lecture “Exit Slips” (15%): Each lecture video has a brief “exit slip” assignment. These assignments are graded complete/incomplete. If you respond to the question with one or two sentences using information from the lecture, you receive full credit.

Participation in Discussion Section (20%): contribute to class learning through critical analysis of course materials and respectful, productive engagement with other students’ views; complete preparation for section discussions as directed by TA.

“Closer Look” Essays (7x4%=28%): a series of one-page responses to questions about an assigned reading or film. Complete 7 out of 8, or complete all 8 and drop your low grade. This assignment recurs from weeks 3 to 11, except in week 6 (when the midterm essay is due).

Midterm Essay, due Sunday 10/11 at 11:59pm (8%): a two-page essay answering a question about a primary source, which you will select from a list of options to be made available on October 5th.

Timeline Editor Assignment (8%): due once during the semester, at a time for which you will sign up. For more details, see “Timeline Assignment” materials on Canvas.

Final Timeline (8%): due Monday, 12/14, 11:59pm. For more details, see “Timeline Assignment” materials on Canvas.

Timeline Essay (10%): due Monday, 12/14, 11:59pm. A three-page essay elaborating on the argument of your final timeline. For more details, see “Timeline Assignment” materials on Canvas.

Late Policy

Late work will lose one third of a letter grade for each day past the deadline. However, for the midterm essay, OR for up to two of the “closer look” assignments, you may hand in work late for “passing” (70%) credit until Thursday, December 10th, at 11:59pm. Due to the need to submit course grades promptly at the end of the semester, we cannot accept any work other than the final assignments after December 10th, and we cannot grant any extensions on the final assignments. Students who experience emergencies at the end of the semester may be eligible for an incomplete.

Special Note on Accommodations for Sick or Quarantined Students

If your semester is disrupted due to exposure to or diagnosis with COVID-19 (or another health crisis), the TA and I will offer you reasonable accommodations to continue your progress in this course without penalty. Please note that the success of this process depends on your timely communication with us. For more details, see “University Policies Relating to COVID-19,” on page 6.

Learning Support

Accommodations

You are welcome to discuss your learning needs with me and/or the TA. If you plan to request disability accommodations in this course, please register with the McBurney Disability Resource Center as soon as possible.

If you are looking for more information about policies relating to COVID-19, please see page 6.

Writing Support: The History Lab

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 can help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer. The History Lab is offering virtual meetings this semester. Go to:

<https://history.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/the-history-lab/>

Digital Assignment Support: Design Lab – Located in College Library, Design Lab provides one-on-one help for students working on digital assignments. By appointment. <https://designlab.wisc.edu/> In many situations, our history TAs in the History Lab will also be able to help students with their digital history assignments as well.

General Tech Support

The DoIT help desk offers general tech support for Canvas, BBCollaborate, and others platforms supported by UW. They can also direct you to resources for dealing with bandwidth problems. <https://it.wisc.edu/services/help-desk/>.

Additional Tech Support

Please see the course website's tech support module for additional resources.

Your instructors want to know if technical problems are hindering your participation in the course. However, we have no expertise in technical support. Please let us know if you are having an extended problem, but consult the appropriate UW resources for solutions.

Academic Integrity

You are responsible for knowing and following the university's policies on academic integrity, which can be found here:

<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/>

In general, work that you turn in for this course should be yours alone. *Limited* exceptions apply to *parts* of the timeline assignment, which includes a collaborative element. Please see the timeline assignment for details.

University Policies Relating to COVID-19

The following language has been provided by UW-Madison administration and is standard for all courses this semester.

UW-Madison [Face Covering Guidelines](#)

While on campus all employees and students are required to wear [appropriate and properly fitting face coverings](#) while present in any campus building unless working alone in a laboratory or office space.

Face Coverings During In-person Instruction Statement (COVID-19)

Individuals are expected to wear a face covering while inside any university building. Face coverings must be [worn correctly](#) (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose) in the building if you are attending class in person. If any student is unable to wear a face-covering, an accommodation may be provided due to disability, medical condition, or other legitimate reason.

Students with disabilities or medical conditions who are unable to wear a face covering should contact the [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#) or their Access Consultant if they are already affiliated. Students requesting an accommodation unrelated to disability or medical condition, should contact the Dean of Students Office.

Students who choose not to wear a face covering may not attend in-person classes, unless they are approved for an accommodation or exemption. All other students not wearing a face covering will be asked to put one on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear face coverings appropriately or adhere to other stated requirements will be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards](#) and will not be allowed to return to the classroom until they agree to comply with the face covering policy. An instructor may cancel or suspend a course in-person meeting if a person is in the classroom without an approved face covering in position over their nose and mouth and refuses to immediately comply. **The History Department has directed instructors to halt the class and, if necessary, leave the classroom if anyone in the room is not wearing a properly fitted mask.**

Quarantine or Isolation Due to COVID-19

Students should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 [symptoms](#) and [get tested for the virus](#) if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Students should reach out to instructors as soon as possible if they become ill or need to isolate or quarantine, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with their instructor concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course (either in-person or remote). **The instructor will work with the student to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.**

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Note: I try not to change readings or assignments once the semester begins. However, the most up-to-date information on what you need to read, watch, or turn in is always available on Canvas.

PART 1: MODERN STATE AND SOCIETY TAKE SHAPE IN THE 19TH CENTURY

WEEK 1 (9.2-9.6): INTRODUCTIONS

Lecture A: What makes a region? Intro to Middle East geography and overview of this course

Lecture B: Where and how did the Ottomans Rule?

Optional reading: Gelvin, pp. 9-57 (surveys Middle East and Islamic history prior to our course coverage).

Syllabus quiz due Sunday 9/6 at 11:59pm.

WEEK 2 (9.7-9.13): ARMIES AND EDUCATION IN THE AGE OF REFORM

Lecture A: The Crises of the Ottoman Empire

Lecture B: Egypt under Mehmet Ali Pasha: Reform by Force

Lecture C: The Tanzimat: Late Ottoman Reform in Rhetoric and Practice

Read for section: Gelvin, pp. 72-89, "Defensive Developmentalism"; and primary sources: Tahtawi, "An Imam in Paris," pp. 205-209 (on Canvas); Reynolds, "The Autobiography of Ali Mubarak," selections from pp. 224-250 (on Canvas).

WEEK 3 (9.14-9.20): PEASANTS AND WORKERS IN THE FIRST AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

Lecture A: Globalization in the Countryside

Lecture B: Foreign Capital and Middle East Labor

Lecture C: Middle East Cities in the First Age of Globalization

Read for section: Owen, "The Expansion of Trade with Europe, 1800-1850," pp. 83-99 (on Canvas); Khater and Khater, "Assaf: A Peasant of Mount Lebanon," pp. 35-47 (on Canvas); and primary source: Khater (ed.), "A Coal Miner's Life During the Late Ottoman Empire," pp. 47-56 (on Canvas).

"Closer Look" reading: Khuri-Makdisi, "Theater and Radical Politics in Beirut, Cairo, and Alexandria, 1860-1914," pp. 60-93 (on Canvas).

WEEK 4 (9.21-9.27): NEW CULTURAL AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Lecture A: Print and the Arabic *Nahda*

Lecture B: Muslim Reformists

Lecture C: Debating Women, and Women Debating

Read for section: Gelvin, pp. 140-157, "The Life of the Mind" and "Secularism and Modernity"; primary source: Muhammad 'Abduh, "The Theology of Unity" (in Gelvin, pp. 179-181); Bahithat al-Badiya, "A Lecture in the Club of the Umma Party, 1909," 227-238 (on Canvas).

"Closer Look" reading: Baron, *The Women's Awakening in Egypt*, pp. 38-57 (on Canvas).

WEEK 5: (9.28-10.4) THE OLD ORDER BEGINS TO FALL BEFORE WORLD WAR I

Lecture A: Financial Imperialism? State Bankruptcy and the British Occupation of Egypt

Lecture B: The Young Turk Revolution and Iran's Constitutional Movement

Read for section: Gelvin, pp. 158-165, "Constitutionalism"; and primary sources: "The Supplementary Fundamental Law of 7 October 1907" (in Gelvin, pp. 182-185), and Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, pp. 123-132.

"Closer Look" assignment: Lucas, "The Creation of Iranian Music," pp. 143-157 (Canvas).

WEEK 6 (10.5-10.11): WORLD WAR I AND THE POST-OTTOMAN ORDER

Lecture A: The Great War and Ethnic Cleansing in the Middle East

Lecture B: The Mandate System and the post-Ottoman Political Map

Lecture C: Review of Part I of Course

Read for section: Gelvin, pp. 189-204, "World War I and the Middle East State System," "State-Building by Decree"; and primary sources: Letter from an Armenian Refugee (pp. 20-21), in Bryce, *The Treatment of Armenians* (on Canvas), and Khater (ed.), the Huseyn-McMahon Correspondence; the Balfour Declaration and related documents, pp. 104-108, 110-112 (on Canvas).

Midterm Paper Due Sunday, 10/11, at 11:59pm. No "closer look" assignment this week.

PART 2: NATION-STATES EMERGE IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Week 7 (10.12-10.18): EGYPT AND SYRIA: ANTI-COLONIAL NATIONALISM, PAN-ARABISM, AND THE MILITARY REPUBLIC

Lecture A: Egypt: Nasser and the Pan-Arab Dream

Lecture B: Syria: from Mass Politics to Family Rule

Lecture C: The Islamist Critique

Read for section: Gelvin, pp. 205-229, "State-Building by Revolution and Conquest," "The Invention and Spread of Nationalisms"; and primary sources: Tamer, "Tigers on the Tenth Day" (in Gelvin, pp. 360-62); and Qutb, *Milestones* (in Gelvin, pp. 366-68).

"Closer Look" film: *Umm Kulthum: A Voice Like Egypt*, dir. Michal Goldman (streaming on Canvas).

WEEK 8 (10.19-10.25): IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA: RELIGIOUS AUTHORITARIANISM, OIL, AND THE COLD WAR

Lecture A: Saudi Arabia: the Wahhabi Mission and the House of Saud

Lecture B: Iran: from Monarchy to Islamic Republic

Lecture C: Oil and the Middle Eastern States

Read for section: Gelvin, pp. 270-299, "The Autocratic State," "Oil"; and primary source: Reports on the Saudi Vice Squad in Jeddah, 1928-1930 (3 pages, on Canvas); watch *Bashu: The Little Stranger* (streaming on Canvas).

"Closer Look" reading: Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran*, pp. 186-194, 248-268, 272-287.

WEEK 9 (10.26-11.1): IRAQ AND TURKEY: SECULAR AUTHORITARIANISM

Lecture A: Iraq from the Hashemites to Saddam Hussein

Lecture B: Turkey between Republic and Military Rule

Lecture C: At the Margins of the Nation-State: the Kurds in Iraq and Turkey

Read for section: primary source: "Speech Delivered by Ghazi Mustapha Kemal," pp. 738-741 (on Canvas); watch *Journey to the Sun* (streaming on Canvas)

"Closer Look" reading: Özdalga, *The Veiling Issue: Official Secularism and Popular Islam in Modern Turkey*, pp. 39-60 (on Canvas).

WEEK 10 (11.2-11.8): ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

Lecture A: One Land, Many National Movements

Lecture B: The Arab-Israeli Wars: The Conflict in Regional and International Context

Lecture C: Hamas, the Settler Movement, and the Many Deaths of the Two-State Solution

Read for section: Gelvin, pp. 230-247 ("The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict"); Hiltermann, "Abu Jamal: A Palestinian Urban Villager," pp. 268-280 (on Canvas); primary source: Herzl, "A Solution of the Jewish Question" (in Gelvin, pp. 253-254).

"Closer look" reading: Shapira and Wiskind-Elper, "Politics and Collective Memory: The Debate over the 'New Historians' in Israel."

WEEK 11 (11.9-11.15): THE U.S. IN THE MIDDLE EAST: FOREIGN POLICY, DOMESTIC POLITICS

Lecture A: From World War II to Camp David: The Cold War and Oil

Lecture B: In search of a strategy: from the Peace Process to the Global War on Terror

Lecture C: Review of Part II of Course

Read for section: Gelvin, pp. 300-316 (“The United State and the Middle East”); primary source: “National Security Council Report... November 4, 1958: U.S. Policy toward the Near East,” in *Foreign Relations of the United States* (on Canvas).

“Closer look” reading: George Packer, “An Unfinished War,” pp. 8-38 (on Canvas)

PART 3: “THE PEOPLE WANT THE FALL OF THE REGIME”

WEEK 12 (11.16-11.22): DEBATING ISLAM AND POLITICS

Lecture A: The Islamic Revival

Lecture B: Jihadism in Global Context

Lecture C: Sunni and Shiite: The Sectarianization of the Middle East

Read for section: Rock-Singer, “Prayer and the Islamic Revival,” pp. 293-312; and primary source: Bin Laden, “Messages to the World,” pp. 213-221, 227-232 (on Canvas).

WEEK 13 (11.23-11.25): AN “ARAB SPRING”? EXPLAINING THE UPRISINGS

Lecture A: The Uprisings of 2009-2011

Read: Gelvin, pp. 317-345 (“Resistance,” “The Arab Uprisings”), and watch *The Square* (streaming on Canvas, also on Netflix).

Thanksgiving Break: no section meeting this week.

WEEKS 14 (11.30-12.6): AN AGE OF COUNTER-REVOLUTION? THE MIDDLE EAST SINCE 2012

Lecture A: Egypt: The Endurance of Military Rule

Lecture B: Syria’s Descent

Lecture C: Saudi Arabia and Its Neighbors

Read for section: primary sources: Pearlman, *We Crossed a Bridge and It Trembled: Voices from Syria*, pp. 175-187, 209-215, 225, 230-234 (on Canvas); Amira Al-Sharif, “Yemeni Women with Fighting Spirits,” pp. 150-165 (on Canvas).

WEEKS 15 (12.7-12.10): CONCLUSIONS

Lecture A: The Middle East Political Order in the 21st Century: Lessons from the Rise and Fall of ISIS

Lecture B: History and the Middle East Today (final lecture)

Read for section: Gelvin, pp. 347-358, “The End of an Era?”

Final timeline and timeline essay due Monday 12/14 at 11:59pm.