

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

History 201-5, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Fall 2021

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

Course meetings: Mondays, 8:50-10:45am / Humanities 5255

Office hours: F 9-11am on Zoom, in person by appointment.



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.

Please let me know if this policy poses a challenge for you, whether for financial reasons or because of a specific learning need. 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.

If your semester is disrupted due to exposure to or diagnosis with COVID-19 (or another health crisis), 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 me. For more details, see "University Policies Relating to COVID-19," on page 5.

### 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 can help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer. Go to: <https://history.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/the-history-lab/>

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](http://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. 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 11/1: 7%

Annotated bibliography (2-3 pages), due 11/8: 8%

Review essay on a secondary source (3 pages), due 11/15: 10%

Interpretation of a primary source (2 pages), due 11/22: 10%

Draft of your independent research paper (8-10 pages), due 12/6: 10%

In-class presentation (5 minutes), 12/13: 5%

Final draft of your research paper, due 12/15: 15%

Your class participation: 25%

This course is graded on an A, AB, B, BC, C, D, F scale:

- A = 93-100
- AB = 88-92
- B = 82-87
- BC = 77-81
- C = 72-76
- D = 67-71
- F = 66 or below.

### Participation Rubric

Excellent (90-100)	Good (80-90)	Competent (70-80)	Inadequate (60-70)	Fail (0-60)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Mastery over readings and previous discussion</li> <li>-Explores questions rigorously</li> <li>-Comes to class with interpretations and questions</li> <li>-Engages others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Knows readings well</li> <li>-Consistent preparation and involvement</li> <li>-Offers analysis of texts in class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Basic grasp of reading</li> <li>-Mostly offers facts or surface-level interpretations</li> <li>-Contributes when called upon but not actively engaged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Insufficient command of reading</li> <li>-Attempts to contribute facts or interpretations when called but unable to offer substance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Uninvolved</li> <li>-Unexcused</li> <li>-Disruptive</li> </ul>

### Late and Missing Work

Assignments are due at the dates and times listed on the syllabus and/or 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 an "F" for every additional 24-hour period that passes. However, you may hand in **one** missed assignment up to the last class day of the semester for "passing" (D) credit. Work that remains missing as of 11:59pm on December 16 (study day) will receive no credit.

### 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 illness, family 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. For Covid-related absences, see below.

## University Policies Relating to COVID-19

For the latest campus policies related to the pandemic, please go to <https://covidresponse.wisc.edu>

Here are a few highlights:

- All students, employees and visitors to campus are required to wear face masks when inside campus buildings.
- Effective August 30, employees and students who have not shared proof of COVID-19 vaccination with UHS will be required to test weekly on campus. Those who are required to test weekly but fail to do so will be held accountable.
- Individual students unable to attend in-person class meetings for COVID-19-related reasons (or for any reason) should contact their instructor to discuss options for access to course materials and activities. Instructors are encouraged to be flexible and supportive of all students in such circumstances. Students who must miss multiple class sessions should talk with their instructor and with their academic advisor about the best course of action.
- If multiple students in a course section must miss in-person class meetings for COVID-19-related reasons, every effort should be made to avoid a disruption of in-person instruction. Instructors should work with their department, school and college to explore ways to provide students who cannot attend in-person sessions access to course materials and activities.

**In any situation where accommodations are required, students should initiate timely and regular communication with their instructors.**

## SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Th-F 9/9-9/10: I strongly encourage you to sign up on Canvas for a 10-minute Zoom meeting with me to discuss your course expectations and interests.

### M 9.13 The Middle East at the Dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 9.20 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 9.27 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 10.4 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 10.11: 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 10.18: 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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 1-17.

- **\*Bring to class: writing selection\***
- Prepare for class: questions on Goldstone
- Meet with me this week (**or next**) to discuss your prospective research topic

#### M 10.25: Technology and Social Change: Some Perspectives from "STS"

*Crafting a thesis statement; 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 11.1: "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 11.8: Social Media and Iran's Green Movement

*Drafting; 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*, 5B→5N and 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 11.15: Social Media and the Arab Uprisings

- Wael Ghonim, *Revolution 2.0*, pp. 58-81.
  - Wael Ghonim's 2013 TED Talk.
- Due on Canvas: three-page review of a major secondary source on your research topic.
- Prepare for class: questions on Ghonim

### M 11.22: The Debate on Online Radicalization

- Reading TBA
- Due on Canvas: two-page contextualization and interpretation of a major primary source for your research paper.

### M 11.29: Writing Clinic

*Revising the draft.*

**M 12.6: Peer Review**

*Offering and receiving effective criticism; further strategies for revising.*

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

**M 12.13: 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 on Canvas on Wednesday, December 15, at 11:159pm.**