

History 139: Introduction to the Modern Middle East

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Fall 2023

Lecture meetings: M/W Humanities r. 1101; Fri. online
Section meetings: Th, time/location varies by section

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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? Balances a generally thematic approach with several weeks of country-specific studies, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, and Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Course Overview

Course Requisite: None

Course Designations, Attributes, and Mode of Instruction:

Level – Elementary

Breadth – Humanities or Social Science

Mode – Face-to-Face/Blended

For the course schedule of meetings and readings, turn to page 8.

Explanation of credit hours

This 4-credit course meets as a group for 4 hours per week. 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 Goals/Learning Outcomes

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*, 5th ed. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2020). ISBN 978-0190074067
 - Available from many booksellers and on reserve in College Library.
 - **Please note:** I encourage you to use the **fifth edition** of Gelvin's textbook (2020). If you use a fourth edition copy, please note that page numbers sometimes vary slightly from the page numbers on the syllabus, and the final two chapters differ substantively. I discourage you from using editions earlier than the fourth.
- Find on Canvas, in weekly modules: all other assigned readings, assigned films, and supplementary materials.
- *All assignments will be posted and turned in on Canvas.*

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.

PROF. STOLZ: Fridays 9-11am, on Zoom (link on Canvas). In person by appointment.

TA EMIR KARAKAYA: Tuesdays 10am-12pm on Zoom (link on Canvas). In person by appointment.

Assessment

Components of Course Grade (in descending order of 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. See participation rubric below.

“Closer Look” Essays (4x4%=16%): a series of one-page responses to questions about an assigned reading or film. Complete 4 out of 5, or complete all 5 and drop your low grade.

Occasional Friday quizzes (4x4%=16%). These quizzes are untimed and will be on Canvas. Quizzes will typically **not** include material from the Friday when they are due. Complete 4 out of 5, or complete all 5 and drop your low grade.

Final Essay (15%): due Monday, 12/19, 11:59pm. A four-page essay that makes an argument interpreting your section’s timeline of Middle East history. For more details, see “Timeline Assignment” materials on Canvas.

Midterm Essay, due Sunday 10/19 at 11:59pm (10%): 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 (10%): due once during the semester, at a time for which you will sign up. For more details, see “Timeline Assignment” materials on Canvas.

Participation in lecture meetings (5%): contribute to class learning through critical analysis of course materials and respectful, productive engagement with other students’ views. See participation rubric below.

Orientation quiz (3%): Complete by 11:59pm on Monday 9/11. Covers course expectations. You may retake for full credit if desired.

Honors Assignment: if you registered for the honors option in this course, please discuss an honors assignment with Prof. Stolz by Nov. 1st. Honors assignments are due Dec. 13th.

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)
-Mastery over readings and previous discussion -Explores questions rigorously -Comes to class with interpretations and questions -Engages others	-Knows readings well -Consistent preparation and involvement -Offers analysis of texts in class	-Basic grasp of reading -Mostly offers facts or surface-level interpretations -Contributes when called upon but not actively engaged	-Insufficient command of reading -Attempts to contribute facts or interpretations when called but unable to offer substance	-Uninvolved -Unexcused -Disruptive

Policies

Academic Integrity and AI

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. For the final essay, it is understood that you will reference your classmates' contributions to your section timeline. For more details, see timeline assignment materials on Canvas.

You may not use AI to assist with any assignment in this course.

Late Policy

Late work will lose one half-grade for each day past the deadline. For example, work ordinarily meriting an AB will receive a B if submitted one day late, and an F if five or more days late. However, for the midterm essay, OR for one of the "closer look" assignments, you may hand in work late for "passing" (70%) credit until 11:59pm on Study Day, which is Thursday, December 14th, 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 assignment after December 14th, and we cannot grant any extensions on the final assignment. If you suffer an emergency at the end of the semester, you may be eligible for an incomplete.

Disability 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. Here is the University's policy:

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 ([UW-855](#)) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations during the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after being approved for accommodations. Faculty will work either directly with the student or in coordination with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable instructional and course-related accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Emergency Accommodations

If your semester is disrupted due to health circumstances (including mental health) or another emergency, 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.

How to Do Well in This Course

Emir and I want to help you succeed in this course. Here are three big steps you can take to do well: understand the purpose of the course components; keep track of your jobs in the course; and ask for help.

- 1) Understand the purpose of the course components. A history course tells a story. This course has three units, so you can think of it as a trilogy. Each unit is like a book; each week's lectures and readings form a chapter. Just like when you read a book, you should keep track of the major developments in each chapter, and how the chapters fit together to compose the larger story. You should also take time to reflect on what the story might mean from different perspectives. This is what assignments and section meetings are for! They will help you identify, interpret, and synthesize the major takeaways from each week and unit of the course.

Specific steps you can take to understand the purpose of the course components:

- Read the syllabus carefully, and return to it throughout the semester. Pay special attention to course goals (p. 2), course rhythm (p. 7), and the titles of different days, weeks, and units of the course.
- Attend both lecture and section meetings regularly. You can't just do the readings and assignments, any more than you could read a book if all you had was a stack of pages in random order. Class is where we help you figure out how it all fits together and what it means.
- Notice terms that I often use to signal key points, like "question of the day," "takeaways," and "conclusions."
- Consult "Tips on Reading and Preparing for this Course," in the welcome module on Canvas.
- Ask questions in class.
- Attend office hours.

- 2) Keep track of your jobs in the course. Emir and I will do our best to explain concepts clearly, but you won't learn much if you don't do your half of the course.

Things you can do to keep track of your jobs in this course:

- Read the syllabus carefully, and return to it throughout the semester. Pay special attention to assignment dates and descriptions (pp. 2-3), in addition to course rhythm (p. 7). Understand the late policy (p. 4).
- Regularly check the course website, especially "This Week's Materials" and "Next Week's Materials."
- Read the assignment prompt carefully before beginning an assignment. Return to it while completing the assignment, and check it one final time before turning in your work. Is it clear how your work responds to the question we asked you?
- Familiarize yourself with the timeline assignment materials early in the semester, and sign up for your week as timeline editor.
- Read our comments on your assignments, and reread them before completing your next assignment.
- Ask questions in class.
- Attend office hours.

- 3) Ask for help. You can ask for help from either instructor in this course, or from staff at any of the campus resource centers listed at the bottom of this page.

When thinking about whether and how to ask for help, please consider:

- Communication is essential.
- What kind of help do you need? Questions about course content, assignments, and emergency extensions are best brought to an instructor. Accommodations for disabilities typically require support from the McBurney Center. In-depth writing or technical support is available through other campus resource centers, listed below.
- Asking for the help that you need is part of navigating college maturely. The McBurney Disability Center serves over 3,600 students annually. The History Lab sees hundreds of students every semester.

Disability Accommodations and Resources: the McBurney Center

The McBurney Center serves “UW-Madison students with physical, learning, hearing, vision, psychological, health and other disabilities substantially affecting a major life activity.” See [McBurney Disability Resource Center – UW-Madison \(wisc.edu\)](https://wisc.edu/mcburney-center). The Center can arrange a variety of accommodations, including but not limited to notetaking services, extra time on exams, and alternative formats for course materials. Students should register with the Center and communicate with instructors as soon as possible to begin the accommodations process.

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. 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/> Note: our TAs in the History Lab can sometimes help with digital history assignments as well.

General Tech Support

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

Course Modality and Rhythm

This course is offered in a “blended” modality. Most meetings are in-person; some synchronous meetings and asynchronous activities take place online. The blended format promotes learning by offering students additional methods of engagement with the material, with each other, and with the instructors. Many students find it 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 helps you structure your time and keep up with the course at a manageable 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:

Monday and Wednesday 11:00-11:50am: In-Person Lectures with Professor Stolz.

These lectures introduce the main topics of the week. They complement and do **not** replicate the textbook readings for the week. In addition, many of these meetings include discussion of a short reading from beyond the textbook—often a primary source. Please complete these readings by the date on which they appear on the schedule of meetings (see below).

Thursday: In-Person Discussion Section. Led by TA Emir Karakaya, who is a PhD student in History, these sections meet in person 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.

Friday 11:00-11:50am: Online Meetings/Activities with Prof. Stolz. Most Friday meetings will include a synchronous lecture, typically shorter than the M/W lectures. These online meetings will include time for students to complete a very brief “exit” assignment in which you summarize your learning from the week in 2-3 sentences, to which Prof. Stolz will respond. Some online meetings will be used to introduce the TimelineJS tool with which you will be working throughout the semester, and to develop your facility with this storytelling technology.

A “closer look” assignment or quiz: most weeks of the course end *either* with a quiz on Canvas, due Friday, *or* a “closer look” essay due Sunday. The quizzes are untimed and may be taken before Friday. The closer look assignments ask for a one-page response to an article, book chapter, or film that you do NOT need to prepare to discuss in class.

In addition to its weekly components, the course also includes the following occasional assignments: an orientation quiz, one “timeline editor” assignment during a week of your choosing, one midterm essay, and one final essay.

More information on assignments appears under “Assessment,” on pages 2-3.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Note: this schedule does not include the Thursday section meetings. Your TA will provide you with a separate syllabus for your section. However, in most weeks, the readings and films to prepare for section are the ones already listed under the lecture meetings below.

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

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTIONS

W 9.6: What makes a region?

- Into to course goals and expectations
- Into to Middle East geography and the idea of the “Middle East” as a region

F 9.8: Origins of Ottoman Modernity: *Online/synchronous*

Optional reading: Gelvin, pp. 9-55 (surveys Mideast and Islamic history prior to course coverage).

WEEK 2: ARMIES AND EDUCATION IN THE AGE OF REFORM

M 9.11: Egypt under Mehmed Ali Pasha: Reform by Force

Read: Tahtawi, “An Imam in Paris,” pp. 205-209 (on Canvas); Reynolds, “The Autobiography of Ali Mubarak,” selections from pp. 224-250 (on Canvas).

W 9.13: Tanzimat: Late Ottoman Reform in Rhetoric and Practice. *Online/synchronous.*

F 9.15: Iran: Intro to Late Qajar Society

Due Sunday 9.18: “Closer look” response to Wishnitzer, “On Time for School,” p. 93-123.

WEEK 3: PEASANTS AND WORKERS IN THE FIRST AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

M 9.18: Globalization in the Countryside

Read: 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).

W 9.20: Foreign Capital and Middle East Labor

Read: Khater (ed.), “A Coal Miner’s Life During the Late Ottoman Empire,” pp. 47-56 (on Canvas).

F 9.22: Middle East Cities in the First Age of Globalization. *Online/synchronous*

Canvas quiz due this Friday.

WEEK 4: NEW CULTURAL AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

M 9.25: Print and the Arabic *Nahda*. *This class will be offered as a recorded lecture to avoid conflict with the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur. We will not meet in person.*

Read: Gelvin, pp. 140-157, "The Life of the Mind" and "Secularism and Modernity"; al-Nadim, "Raillery and Reproach," pp. 104-111 in *The Arabic Renaissance*, ed. El-Ariss (on Canvas).

W 9.27: Muslim Reformists

Read: Muhammad 'Abduh, "The Theology of Unity" (in Gelvin, pp. 179-180).

F 9.29: Debating Women, and Women Debating *Online/synchronous*

Read: Bahithat al-Badiya, "A Lecture in the Club of the Umma Party, 1909," 227-238 (on Canvas).

Due Sunday 10.1: "Closer Look" response to Khuri-Makdisi, "Theater and Radical Politics in Beirut, Cairo, and Alexandria, 1860-1914," pp. 60-93 (on Canvas).

WEEK 5: THE OLD ORDER BEGINS TO FALL BEFORE WORLD WAR I

M 10.2: Financial Imperialism? State Bankruptcy and the British Occupation of Egypt

Read: Gelvin, pp. 158-165, "Constitutionalism"; Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, pp. 123-132 (on Canvas).

W 10.4: Iran's Constitutional Movement. *This class will be offered as a recorded lecture in order to avoid conflict with the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur. We will not meet in person.*

Read: "The Supplementary Fundamental Law of 7 October 1907" (in Gelvin, pp. 182-185),

F 10.6: The Young Turk Revolution. *Online/synchronous*

Read: Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization*, excerpts (on Canvas).

Due Sunday 10.8: "Closer Look" response to Lucas, "The Creation of Iranian Music," pp. 143-157 (Canvas).

WEEK 6: WORLD WAR I AND THE POST-OTTOMAN ORDER

M 10.9: The Great War and Ethnic Cleansing in the Middle East

Read: Gelvin, pp. 189-206, "World War I and the Middle East State System," "State-Building by Decree"; and primary source: Bryce, *The Treatment of Armenians*, pp. 20-21 (on Canvas).

W 10.11: The Mandate System and the post-Ottoman Political Map

Read: Khater (ed.), the Huseyn-McMahon Correspondence; the Balfour Declaration and related documents, pp. 104-108, 110-112 (on Canvas).

F 10.13: Midterm check-in: *Online synchronous session to review part I of course and workshop skills in TimelineJS.*

****Midterm Paper Due Sunday, 10/15, at 11:59pm.****

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

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

M 10.16: Egypt: Nasser and the Pan-Arab Dream

Read: Gelvin, pp. 205-229, "State-Building by Revolution and Conquest," "The Invention and Spread of Nationalisms." Watch: excerpt from *Umm Kulthum: A Voice Like Egypt*, dir. Michal Goldman (streaming on Canvas).

W 10.18: Syria: from Mass Politics to Family Rule

Read: Tamer, "Tigers on the Tenth Day" (in Gelvin, pp. 366-68).

F 10.20: The Islamist Critique. *Online synchronous lecture & response.*

Read: Qutb, *Milestones* (in Gelvin, pp. 372-74).

Canvas quiz due this Friday.

WEEK 8: IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA: OIL, THE COLD WAR, AND ISLAMIC GOVERNMENT

M 10.23: Saudi Arabia: the Wahhabi Mission and the House of Saud

Read: Gelvin, pp. 272-302, "The Autocratic State," "Oil"; and primary source: Reports on the Saudi Vice Squad in Jedda, 1928-1930 (3 pages, on Canvas).

W 10.25: Iran: from Monarchy to Islamic Republic

Watch *Bashu: The Little Stranger* (access TBD).

F 10.27: Oil and the Middle Eastern States. *Online synchronous TimelineJS workshop; also watch short asynchronous lecture video*

Due Sunday 10.29: "Closer Look" response to Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran*, pp. 186-194, 248-268, 272-287.

WEEK 9: ALGERIA, YEMEN, AND THE EASTERN ARABIAN KINGDOMS: DECOLONIZATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

M 10.30 The Algerian War and Independence

Watch: *The Battle of Algiers* (streaming on Canvas)

W 11.1 Decolonization and Civil War in Yemen

Read: Lackner, "Why Yemen Matters," excerpts (on Canvas)

F 11.3: Migrant Labor in the Eastern Arabian Kingdoms. *Online/synchronous*

Canvas quiz due this Friday.

WEEK 10: IRAQ, TURKEY, AND THE KURDS

M 11.6: Iraq from the Hashemites to Saddam Hussein

Read: Bashkin, "Baghdadi Jews and the *Wathba*" (Canvas)

W 11.8: Turkey between Republic and Military Rule

Read: primary source: "Speech Delivered by Ghazi Mustapha Kemal," pp. 738-741 (on Canvas);

Watch *Journey to the Sun* (streaming on Canvas).

Instead of F 11.10 meeting: *Online asynchronous lecture, "At the Margins of the Nation-State: the Kurds in Iraq and Turkey": watch this before section on Thursday to prepare for discussion of film.*

Due Sunday 11.13: "Closer Look" response to Özdalga, *The Veiling Issue: Official Secularism and Popular Islam in Modern Turkey*, pp. 39-60 (on Canvas).

WEEK 11: ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

M 11.13: Origins of the Jewish and Palestinian National Movements

Read: Gelvin, pp. 232-250 ("The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict"); and primary source: Herzl, "A Solution of the Jewish Question" (in Gelvin, pp. 256-257).

W 11.15: The Arab-Israeli Wars

Read: Hiltermann, "Abu Jamal: A Palestinian Urban Villager," pp. 268-280; Neuman, "June Leavitt: A West Bank Settler" (on Canvas).

F 11.17 Hamas, the Settler Movement, and the Two-State Solution. *Online synchronous lecture and response.*

Canvas quiz due this Friday.

WEEK 12: THE U.S. IN THE MIDDLE EAST: FOREIGN POLICY, DOMESTIC POLITICS

M 11.20: From World War II to Camp David: The Cold War and Oil

Read: Gelvin, pp. 303-320 ("The United State and the Middle East"); and 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).

W 11.22: In search of a strategy: from the Peace Process to the Global War on Terror

Read: George Packer, "An Unfinished War," pp. 8-38 (on Canvas)

****Thanksgiving Break: no section meeting and no Friday meeting this week.****

PART 3: "THE PEOPLE WANT THE FALL OF THE REGIME"

WEEK 13: DEBATING ISLAM AND POLITICS

M 11.27: The Islamic Revival

Read: Rock-Singer, "Prayer and the Islamic Revival," pp. 293-312 (Canvas).

W 11.29: Jihadism in Global Context

Read: Bin Laden, "Messages to the World," pp. 213-221, 227-232 (on Canvas). Note: additional readings on jihadism may be uploaded to canvas.

F 12.1: Sectarian Politics and the Lebanese Civil War. *Online synchronous lecture and response.*

WEEK 14: REVOLUTION AND COUNTERREVOLUTION: EXPLAINING THE ARAB SPRING

M 12.4: The Uprisings of 2009-2011

Read: Gelvin, pp. 321-347 ("Resistance")

W 12.6: Egypt: The Endurance of Military Rule

Watch *The Square* (streaming on Canvas, also on Netflix).

F 12.8: Syria's Descent. *Online synchronous lecture and discussion (no response).*

Read: Pearlman, *We Crossed a Bridge and It Trembled: Voices from Syria*, pp. 175-187, 209-215, 225, 230-234 (on Canvas).

Canvas quiz due this Friday.

WEEK 15: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE AND THE MIDDLE EAST TODAY

M 12.11: The Middle East Political Order in the 21st Century: Lessons from the Rise and Fall of ISIS

Read: Gelvin, p. 348-362 ("A New Middle East?")

W 12.13: History and the Middle East Today (final lecture)

Read: Amira Al-Sharif, "Yemeni Women with Fighting Spirits," pp. 150-165 (on Canvas).

HONORS OPTION STUDENTS: Honors Assignment due 12/13 at 11:59pm.

ALL STUDENTS: Deadline to turn in 1 late assignment: 12/14 at 11:59pm (see page 4).

ALL STUDENTS: final essay due Monday 12/18 at 11:59pm.