

The Modern Middle East, Real and Imagined: An Introduction
MODMDEST 100/200 – Fall 2023
DRAFT-SUBJECT TO MINOR CHANGES

Time: Mondays, 3:45-5:45 PM; Sections TBD

Location: Sever 106

Instructor: Prof. Malika Zeghal, mzeghal@fas.harvard.edu

Teaching Fellow: Conor Dube, cdube@g.harvard.edu

Office Hours: Prof. Zeghal: Tuesdays 6 PM-7PM, or by appointment, on Zoom. Please sign up for office hours via [this link](#). Conor: TBD.

Overview

This course offers an introduction to Middle Eastern Studies focusing on the modern period (19th and 20th centuries). This course is designed to give students an overall good grasp of the history of the modern Middle East and of some of the major themes and approaches/methodologies in modern Middle Eastern Studies. Students will engage critically with some of the most important topics that resonate in that area of the world. We will cover topics such as reformism, economic development, colonialism and nationalism, authoritarianism and democratization, sectarianism, culture, gender, literature, and the arts as well as the role of religion in politics. Most of these topics, in one way or another, will speak to the issue of governance in the Middle East. Lectures will generally be sequenced chronologically but will be organized thematically. They will provide some historical context for each topic examined, as well as present specific examples through primary sources, visual sources, and numerical data when relevant.

This is not a survey course. In particular, it will not be exhaustive in its coverage of the region in space or time, and in its coverage of topics. **Students in search of a specific topic, country, or period, are strongly encouraged to look at the syllabus prior to enrolling to make sure their specific interests will be covered.**

Assigned readings will consist of primary and secondary sources. Students will be exposed to first-hand accounts by protagonists in the history of the Middle East (primary sources) as well as to the diversity of approaches that the scholarly literature (secondary sources) has taken across disciplines, e.g., anthropological studies, quantitative analysis, philology, and textual studies. The larger aim of the course is to develop students' critical thinking in dealing with the history, cultures, politics, and political economies of the contemporary Middle East.

This course is required for all NELC concentrators in The Modern Middle East and for undergraduates pursuing a secondary field in Modern Middle Eastern Studies. There are no prerequisites for this course. All readings will be in English, with no prior knowledge of Arabic

required. Some Arabic terms will reoccur frequently, and we will provide translations and context for these.

Attendance, Absences, Late Assignments, and Missed Tests

Please note that classes will not be recorded. Students are not allowed to record the class with any device.

Lecture and section attendance are mandatory. If you must miss section, please notify your TF at least 24 hours prior, if at all possible. Only absences due to illness, emergency, or those previously discussed with the TF will be excused. To make up for section participation you will write a two-page (double-spaced) response paper on the texts of the section that you missed, due before the next section; by arrangement with the TF, exceptions may be made in cases of extended illness or other extenuating circumstances.

Unexcused absences: You are allowed no more than one unexcused absence in sections, to make up for which you will write a response paper as described above. The second unexcused absence will lower your participation grade by one letter grade, and three or more unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the class.

Assignment deadlines are firm. Any extension requests must be made at least 24 hours in advance and are up to the discretion of the teaching staff. Late assignments will reduce your grade by half a letter grade for each day late. Unexcused missed quizzes will be graded 0 points.

Academic Accommodations: Any student needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to present his or her letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term. Failure to do so may result in the Course Head's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although AEO may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation.

Collaboration and Academic Integrity: Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, **any written work you submit for evaluation must be the result of your own research and writing** and must reflect your own approach to the topic. You must properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work—any standard citation style is acceptable, but you should be consistent. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc.), you must also acknowledge this assistance. Your responses on quizzes and exams

must be entirely your own. Instances of suspected plagiarism or violations of academic integrity are taken extremely seriously and will be submitted to the Harvard College Honor Council.

Generative AI Policy: We expect that all work students submit for this course will be their own. We specifically forbid the use of ChatGPT or any other generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools at any stage of the work process, including preliminary ones. Violations of this policy will be considered academic misconduct.

Requirements and Grading

Your grade will consist of the following elements:

1. **Quizzes (15%):** there will be 7 in-class 10-minute quizzes. These are intended to check reading comprehension and will be straightforward if you are attending lectures and keeping up with the assignments. We will drop the quiz with the lowest score.
2. **Semester Essay Project:** this paper will cover an issue of your choice. This essay is not a review of the secondary literature on the issue at hand. It is rather a semester-long research project, focusing on primary source(s)—texts, works of art in different media, literature, etc.—, quantitative data, or a combination thereof. It will start with a question that relates to one of the units of the course and with a choice of sources and data that will help you formulate your own answer to that question. This choice is important and should be done thoughtfully and carefully with the help of the teaching staff. For instance, you could choose to analyze the issue of women’s rights through one or two autobiographies written by women from the Middle East, or you might analyze the post-Arab Spring election results by looking at the distribution of votes for religious parties in rural and urban areas. You may choose to focus on a specific event, a prominent theme, or on a particular protagonist in the history of the modern Middle East. A Library Guide is available on Canvas and at <https://guides.library.harvard.edu/modernmiddleeast100>. This project will be graded in two parts:
 - a. **Project Proposal (10%) - due Monday, October 2, 2023 at 11:59 PM.** Your proposal should be around 500 words and should address (1) your intended question and its importance; (2) the data or sources you have chosen to answer this question and (3) your plan for how the sources will help you answer the question. At this stage, these choices need not be final, but they should reflect time spent preparing to undertake the project.
 - b. **Final Submission (35%) - due Monday, December 11, 2023 at 11:59 PM.** Your final paper, based on your chosen sources and responding to your research question, should articulate a cogent argument and demonstrate compelling analysis. It will be a maximum of 2,000 words.

3. **Final Exam (25%): Monday December 4, 2023.** The final exam will be held in-class and will be closed-book; more details will be provided as it gets closer.
4. **Section Performance (15%):** this is not strictly a ‘participation’ grade, but covers your attendance, your preparedness, your competence with the topics and themes of the readings, your engagement with your classmates, and your thoughtful contributions to discussions.

200 Level Credit – The *Khubara*¹

Those students enrolled at the 200 level will have an additional, deeper set of readings for each unit. These ‘*Khubara* readings’ range from classic secondary work to cutting-edge research to more comprehensive primary sources. To earn 200 level credit, students must submit a 500-word reading response for each of Units 2-9, answering the ‘*Khubara* questions’ listed under each unit’s readings later in the syllabus. These responses are to be submitted in advance of the final section for that unit and will count towards the section performance portion of your grade.

Note: 100-level students wishing to earn **extra credit** may submit up to 5 of these ‘*Khubara*’ responses. These will earn up to 1 point of extra credit each (to a maximum of 5 points). Extra-credit responses must be submitted by the same deadlines as other responses; you will not be able to make up your grade at the end of the semester by submitting a cluster of responses.

Readings

Contextual Resources (optional, on reserve at Lamont):

William L. Cleveland and Martin Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, Fifth Edition, Westview Press, 2013.

Kenneth J. Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia*, Second Edition, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Susan Gilson Miller, *A History of Modern Morocco*, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

John D. Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation*, Indiana University Press, 1992.

All other readings are available as PDFs (or accessible online) on the course Canvas. These readings are required. They complement the lectures and are **not** a substitute for the lectures or the sections. Lecture PowerPoints will be uploaded on Canvas before the beginning of the relevant lecture. These will provide the outline and summary of the lectures and will illustrate some (but not all) of their contents. They are likewise **not** a substitute for attending the lectures.

THERE WILL BE NO CLASS ON 9/6

¹ *Khubara* (خبراء) is the plural of the Arabic word *khafir* (خبير), meaning ‘expert.’

Unit 1: Introduction – The “Middle East” from the Maghrib to the Mashriq: Overlapping and Moving Geographies

- (9/11): No readings required.

Unit 2: How to Deal with Decline: Reforming the State and Society in the Nineteenth Century

- (9/18):
 - Attempts to Save the State
 - Kay Kivanç Karaman and Sevket Pamuk, “Ottoman State Finances in European Perspective, 1500-1914,” *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 70, no. 3, September 2010, p. 593-629.
 - “The Ottoman Reform Decree of 1839” (Hatt-i Sherif of Gulhane), in James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 167-169.
 - The Issue of Comparison and the Diagnosis of Decline
 - Rifa’a Rafi’ al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris* (Introduced and translated by Daniel Newman, Saqi Books, 2011), p. 177-192 and 216-236.
 - Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, chapter 4: “The First Generation: Tahtawi, Khayreddin, and Bustani,” p. 77-83.
- Khubara (200-level) Reading: Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha’s Men*, Introduction, Chapter 2 (“The Birth of an Army: Conscription and Resistance”), and Conclusion.
 - Response Question: Compare and contrast Karaman and Pamuk’s approach to that of Khaled Fahmy. What lenses and methods do they use? What lessons can you draw from this comparison?

Unit 3: Renewing Political and Religious Thought

- (9/25): [Note: Quizzes begin this week.]
 - Writing about and Implementing State Reform in the Nineteenth Century
 - Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, Chapter 4: “The First Generation: Tahtawi, Khayreddin, and Bustani,” p. 84-95.
 - Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi, *The Surest Path* (1867) (Translation by Leon Carl Brown, *The Surest Path*, Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 65-99.
 - Renewing Islamic Thought and Life
 - Charles Kurzman, *Modernist Islam (1840-1940). A Source Book*, Chapter 3: Muhammad Abduh, p. 50-60; Chapter 6: Muhammad Rashid Rida, p. 77-85.
 - Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, *The Nature of Despotism (Taba’i’ al-Istibdad)*, Aleppo, 1900, p. 5-6.
- Khubara (200-level) Reading: Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, Preface to the 1983 edition, and Chapter 9, “Rashid Rida,” p. 222-244 **AND** Henri Lauzière, *The*

Making of Salafism: Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century, Columbia University Press, 2016, Chapter 2, pp. 60-95.

- Response Question: Compare and contrast Hourani's approach of the thought of Rashid Rida to that of Henri Lauzière. What lenses and methods do they use? What lessons can you draw from this comparison?

Unit 4: Varieties of Colonialism in the Middle East

- (10/2): [Note: Project Proposal Due: **Monday, October 2, 2023** at 11:59 PM]
 - The "Linguistic Turn" in the Humanities
 - Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, Chapters 1 and 2.
 - Was Colonialism an Economic or Ideological Endeavor?
 - Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Preface + Introduction, p. xv-xxx and 1-28.
 - Bernard Lewis, "The Question of Orientalism," *New York Review of Books*, June 24, 1982.
 - Bernard Porter, *The Lion's Share*, Introduction (p. 1-10) and excerpt of Chapter 4 (p. 69-76).
 - Occupation Seen through the Eyes of Middle Easterners and Colonizers
 - Al-Jabarti's *Chronicle of the First Seven Months of the French Occupation of Egypt*, (15 June-December 1798), p. 33-56 and 100-110.
 - Lord Cromer (Evelyn Baring), "The Moslems," in *Modern Egypt, Vol. II* (1908), 168-199.
 - "Algeria: The Poetry of Loss," in Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, p. 175-177.
- Khubara (200-level) Reading: ***EITHER*** watch Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* (Italy: Igor Films, 1965).
 - Response Question: How are colonialism and nationalism represented in this movie? What is the movie trying to tell us about colonialism and nationalism? Analyze this movie as a primary source. You may want to read Franco Solinas, *Gillo Pontecorvo's The Battle of Algiers*, 1973.

OR

- Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Beacon Press, 1965: Part I, "Portrait of the Colonizer," pp. 1-44.
 - Response Question: How does Albert Memmi portray the colonizer in this chapter? How does his literary style serve his depiction of the colonizer? Analyze this chapter as a primary source. You may want to read Jean-Paul Sartre's introduction for context.

THERE WILL BE NO CLASS ON OCTOBER 9

Unit 5: The Nation-State in the Middle East: Triumph and Challenges

- (10/16):
 - State, Nation, Nation-state, and Nationalism: A Few Definitions
 - Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1983, p. 1-7.
 - What Is (or Was) Arab Nationalism? What other Political Ideologies developed?
 - From Sylvia Haim, *Arab Nationalism, An Anthology*, 1976: Rashid Rida, “Islam and the National Idea” p. 75-77, Sati‘ al-Husri, “Muslim Unity and Arab Unity,” p. 147-153; The Party of the Arab Baath, “Constitution,” p. 233-241; Michel Aflaq “Nationalism and revolution,” p. 242-249.
 - Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, “Fin de siècle Egypt. A Nexus for Mediterranean and Global Radical Networks,” in J. Gelvin and N. Green, ed., *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print*, University of California Press. p. 78-100.
 - Competing Visions of the Nation-State
 - Jamal Abd al-Nasser, *The Philosophy of Revolution*, 1955, Part III, p. 79-113.
 - Leila Ahmed, *A Border Passage*, chapter 7, “Suez” 1999, p. 158-178.
- (10/23): [Note: no quiz this week]
 - Nationalism and Religious Difference: Sectarian Politics
 - Fanar Haddad, “Sectarian Relations and Sunni Identity in Post-Civil War Iraq,” in Lawrence Potter, *Sectarian Politics in the Persian Gulf*, 2014, p. 67-116.
 - Joelle Bahloul, *The Architecture of Memory*, 1996, p. 28-50.
 - Mark Tessler, “The Identity of Religious Minorities in Non-Secular States: Jews in Tunisia and Morocco and Arabs in Israel.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20 (1978), p. 359-373.
- Khubara (200-level) Reading: ***EITHER*** Abd al-Hakim Qasim, *Rites of Assent: Two Novellas*, “Al-Mahdi,” (1995) p. 3-63.
 - Response Question: as a work of fiction, what does *Rites of Assent* tell its readers about religious tensions in Egypt? Analyze in particular how the structure and style of the narrative express the tensions at play in the story.

OR

- Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, 1997, Preface and Chapter 6, “Elements of Identity II: The Debate on Zionism in the Arabic Press,” p. 119-144 **AND** Benny Morris’ review of Rashid Khalidi’s book in *Israel Studies*, Spring 1998.
 - Response Question: What would you draw from Chapter 6 of R. Khalidi’s book in light of Benny Morris’ review?

Unit 6: The Political Economy of the Modern Middle East

- (10/30):
 - Assessing Narratives of Modernization Fifty Years Later
 - Daniel Lerner *The Passing of Traditional Societies*, 1959, p. 69-75.
 - Hisham Sharabi, *Neopatriarchy*, 1988, p. 45-60.
 - Seeking Economic and Social Development: Successes and Failures
 - “The Middle East and North Africa: Performing Below Potential,” in The World Bank, *Economic Growth in the 1990s. Learning from a Decade of Reform*, 2005, p. 156-162.
 - Charles Issawi, *The Middle East Economy. Decline and Recovery*, 1995, Chapter 8: “Iraq: A Study in Aborted Development,” p. 143-164.
 - Watch Yasser al-Manawahly’s song about the International Monetary Fund: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJIW4LX8Tus>
 - Yasser al-Manawahly, “Sanduquh” (The International Monetary Fund), in Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, 369-370.
 - Oil and the Rentier-States: Resource Curse or Rulers Curse?
 - Michael Ross, “What have we learned about the resource curse?,” 2014
 - Abd al-Rahman Munif, *Cities of Salt*, Chapters 29-31, 74
- Khubara (200-level) Reading: ***EITHER*** Yu-Ming Liou and Paul Musgrave, “Resource Wealth is an Amplifier, not a Curse,” 2012 (note: this article was published in a different version in *Comparative Political Studies*, 2014, Vol. 47(11) under the title “Refining the Oil Curse: Country-Level Evidence From Exogenous Variations in Resource Income”)
 - Response Question: Explain in non-technical terms how this article challenges the oil curse paradigm as understood by the secondary literature surveyed in Michael Ross’s 2014 article “What have we learned about the resource curse?”

OR

- Gollin, D., Jedwan, R., & Vollrath, D., Urbanization with and without Industrialization, *Journal of Economic Growth*, (2016). (You may want to start with the authors’ blog at <http://www.theigc.org/blog/urbanisation-with-and-without-industrialisation/>.)
 - Response Question: Where does the Middle East fit in the authors’ argument? Does the Middle East stand out?

Unit 7: Women and Gender

- (11/6):
 - The Modern Debate about Women’s Rights and the Representation of Women Among Intellectual Elites
 - Tahar Haddad, *Our Woman*, Chapter 8 “Scenes of Married Life.”

- The Renewed Contemporary Debate About Women's Rights: The "Post-Secular Turn"
 - Saba Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety*, Chapter 1 and Epilogue.
- Khubara (200-level) Reading: ***EITHER*** Malika Zeghal, "Veiling and Unveiling Muslim Women: State Coercion, Islam, and the 'Disciplines of the Heart'," in Aziz Esmail and Abdou Filali-Ansary, eds., *The Construction of Belief. Reflections on the Thought of Mohammed Arkoun*, London, Saqi Books, 2012, p. 127-149.
 - Response Question: To what extent is the policy of unveiling women by an authoritarian state an emancipatory policy?

OR

- Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Verdicts of science, Rulings of Faith: Transgender/Sexuality in Contemporary Iran," 2011, p. 533-556.
 - Response Question: How, if at all, does A. Najmabadi's work make you rethink your views about gender in the Middle East?

OR

- Qasim Amin, [The Liberation of Women](#).
 - Response Question: Choose an excerpt and compare it with Tahar Haddad, *Our Woman in Sharia and Society*, chapter 8.

Unit 8: Islam and Politics

- (11/13):
 - The Development of Mass Education: Cultural and Economic Consequences
 - Taha Husayn, *Al-Ayyam*, Chapters 5-14.
 - Dale Eickelman, "Mass Higher Education and the Religious Imagination in Contemporary Arab Societies," *American Ethnologist*, 1992.
 - The Ideology of the Muslim Brothers
 - Hassan al-Banna's "Toward the light," in Euben and Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*, Chapter 2, (p. 56-78).
 - Sayyid Qutb's "Signposts along the Road," in Euben and Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*, Chapter 5, (pp. 129-145).
- Khubara (200-level) Reading: ***EITHER*** Malika Zeghal, "Religion and Politics in Egypt: The Ulema of al-Azhar, Radical Islam, and the State (1952-1994)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 31, no. 3, August 1999, pp. 371-399 ***AND*** M. Q. Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*, Princeton University Press, 2002, Chapter 6, pp. 144-180.
 - Response Question: Analyze the discussion between Zaman and Zeghal.

OR

- Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, Oxford University Press, Chapters 8 and 9, “The Problem” and “The Solution.”
 - Response Question: Explain your understanding of the ideology of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers and its evolution in light of Mitchell’s work. What planks of their thinking surprised you? Did any of them clash with your expectations for “conservative” or “Islamist” groups, and why?

Unit 9: The Arab Spring: Democratization and Its Challenges

- (11/20):
 - The Debate on the Islamists’ “Moderation” Thesis
 - Mona El-Ghobashy, “The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 37, 2005, 373-395.
 - The Unemployed, the Workers, and the Protests: The Economic Roots of Revolt
 - Joel Beinin, “The Rise of Egypt’s Workers,” Carnegie Papers, June 2012.
 - “Tunisian Labor Leaders Reflect Upon Revolt,” Middle East Report, 258, Spring 2011.
 - Robert Springborg, “The Democratization Industry and the Middle East,” Inaugural Lecture, SOAS, 2005.
 - Malika Zeghal, “Constitutionalizing a Democratic Muslim State without Sharia: The Religious Establishment in the Tunisian 2014 Constitution,” in Robert Hefner ed., *Sharia and Modern Muslim Ethics*, Indiana University Press, 2016.
- Khubara (200-level) Reading: Election Program of The Freedom and Justice Party, 2011, Egypt (http://kurzman.unc.edu/files/2011/06/FJP_2011_English.pdf) **AND** “Statement of the 6 April Movement” (Egypt) from February 6, 2011, in James Gelvin, *History of the Modern Middle East*, 368-369 **AND** <http://www.tahrirdocuments.org>.
 - Response Question: Choose a set of documents from these three sources, pick an analytical topic concerning the Arab Spring, and discuss how your document shed light on the topic you chose.

Conclusion

- (11/27): No assigned reading.

Final In-Class Examination: Friday, December 4, 2023.

Final Paper: Due by Monday, December 7, 2023 at 11:59 PM

