



MESAS 100.01: Introduction to the Middle East
T-Th 2:30-3:45 PM, 101 Language Hall

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Office Hrs.: M, W, F 11-11:45 AM & by appt.

Course Description:

This introductory course is designed to give students background knowledge pertaining to a vital part of the world, commonly referred to nowadays as *the Middle East*. This course looks at the Middle East as a broader category to include other regions, namely North Africa. The course will treat a variety of topics—including religious traditions, mythologies, ethnic groups, European colonialism and other significant historical events, forms of governance, revolutions & civil wars, cuisine and food culture, Islamic art and architecture, literary writings, music & film production, etc.—and will span different historical periods, from the dawn of Near Eastern civilizations (ca. 3000 BCE) to the modern times (reaching the twenty-first century), passing through medieval times and the Islamic Golden Age.

Course Objectives: Students enrolled in this course will:

- Gain a deeper knowledge of various aspects of the Middle East.
- Have a more informed understanding of the cultures and politics of the Middle East.
- Learn about the ancient history of the Middle East, the pre-Islamic era, and the rise and spread of Islam both as a religion and a system of governance.
- Learn about important signposts, including European colonialism, decolonization, and the events of the “Arab Spring”.
- Be introduced to film industry, music industry, literary writings, and food culture from the Middle East.
- Demonstrate communication skills in writing and through presentations.
- Enhance their critical skills through writing critical responses to readings on a regular basis.
- Engage in collaborative learning and teamwork.
- Actively participate in the creation of a vibrant and rewarding learning community.

Required Materials:

- *Canvas:* In this course *Canvas* will be used to distribute course materials, communicate online, post assignments & announcements, etc...

Grade Distribution:

• Attendance, Preparedness, & Class Participation	15%
• Critical Responses	15%
• Quizzes	15%
• Exams	25%
• Group Presentation & Leading Discussion	10%
• Final Paper & Abstract	20%

➤ Attendance, Preparedness, & Class Participation (15%)

You must attend class and come prepared for class discussion of the assigned readings. This means you **MUST** read the material **BEFORE** class as indicated on the syllabus. You must attend all classes throughout the semester and arrive to class on time. You are allowed to be absent for a total of **two (2) class sessions**. With every additional absence your final grade for this class will go down 3%. This means you will have to plan ahead with your allowance of **2 absences**. Talk to me ahead of time if you foresee any difficulties with this policy.

My expectations of professionalism extend to classroom etiquette. This includes such behavior as arriving on time, staying in the classroom until an official break or the end of the class period, packing up only when class has finished, and using a computer only for class purposes. You must not use cellphones and other wireless devices during class. Being absent does not absolve one from homework or preparing for the following class.

➤ Critical Responses (15%)

Students are required to post **8 critical responses** on the assigned readings prior to our class meetings. You are of course welcome to post more than 8 responses. These are short responses (about **140-170 words**) to help you engage better with the readings. You may choose one particular point/detail (or a few points/details) that stood out for you, and discuss why **YOU** think it is significant or interesting: Make your **VOICE** heard. Consult the separate handout—posted on **CANVAS**—for more guidelines on writing a critical response/paragraph.

You are also encouraged, but not required, to respond to other posts by classmates. Although the medium may seem informal and the exchanges turn into a conversation, this is an important part of your evaluation and a good training to improve your writing and critical skills. Therefore, make sure to write in correct English, avoid colloquial expressions, and when you disagree with your classmates, remember to express a constructive and articulated criticism. Make sure to submit your posts **by 11:59 PM the night before class meets**.

N.B. Make sure to even out your posts throughout the semester. Don't wait until the end of the semester. Posting only during the last weeks of the semester will negatively affect your grade for this category. The purpose of this component is to help you engage with the course material throughout the semester. The best approach is to post one critical response every week until you've completed all 8 responses.

➤ Quizzes (15%)

These are short (8-minute) quizzes given on the assigned readings of the class meeting. There will be about **7-9 quizzes** throughout the semester. I may or may NOT announce these quizzes in

advance. Therefore, you should always come to class having done the assigned readings. There are no make-ups for quizzes. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

➤ **Exams (25%)**

These are scheduled comprehensive tests covering materials learned in the course. Only students with valid documented absences may take the makeup test, which will have to be taken no later than one week from the student's resumption of attendance.

➤ **Group Presentation & Leading Discussion (10%)**

The class will be divided into groups of three or four students, and each group will give a 20-minute presentation on a topic related to the course. I highly recommend PowerPoint presentations (or another medium) that incorporate audio-visual materials (pictures, maps, charts, etc.).

On presentation-days it is crucial that both the group doing the presentation and the rest of the class come to class well prepared. To this end, presentations must be posted on CANVAS the day before they are due in class by 8 pm. Presenters should lead the discussion and involve the class through verbal questions and/or written exercises.

➤ **Final Research Paper & Abstract (20%)**

You should write a short final paper (5-6 pages, double-space, 12 font) on a topic related to the course. More guidelines TBA. This is due in the last week of classes.

Also, you should submit a one-page abstract no later than March 21st. Your abstract must clearly present your central idea or the question you plan to answer, identify the texts you will investigate, and give a brief explanation of how you intend to develop your topic.

Grading Scale:

A = 93-100	B+ = 87-89	B- = 80-82	C = 70-74	F = 59 and below
A- = 90-92	B = 83-86	C+ = 75-79	D = 60-69	

Policies

Academic Integrity

All students deserve an atmosphere of fairness, honesty and maturity. All of us at Oxford College live by the standards set forth in the Honor Code, which includes the “responsibility for maintaining standards of unimpeachable honesty in all academic work.” The Honor Code also indicates that we cannot tolerate actions in others that violate this code, so we (and you) are obligated to report violations. Oxford College takes this honor code very seriously, as do I, and penalties for violations are severe. Please read the Honor Code carefully; I will trust you to conduct yourselves accordingly. See the Honor Code: <http://oxford.emory.edu/academics/student-services/student-honor-code>

Accommodating Students with a Disability

•If you have a documented disability and have anticipated barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, or presume having a disability (e.g. mental health, attention, learning, vision, hearing, physical or systemic), and are in need of accommodations for this semester, we

encourage you to contact the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) to learn more about the registration process and steps for requesting accommodations at oas_oxford@emory.edu.

•If you are a student that is currently registered with OAS and have not requested or received a copy of your accommodation notification letter, please notify OAS immediately. Students who have accommodations in place are encouraged to coordinate sometime with your professor, during the first week of the semester, to communicate your specific needs for the course as it relates to your approved accommodations. Accommodations are not implemented until the instructor is provided an accommodation letter and discusses the accommodation plan for this course face to face with the OAS student. All discussions with OAS and faculty concerning the nature of your disability remain confidential.

For additional information regarding OA: <http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access>.

Religious Holidays

Instructors are encouraged, not required, to accommodate students' academic needs related to religious holidays. Please make every effort to negotiate your religious holiday needs within the first two weeks of the semester; waiting longer may compromise your instructor's ability to extend satisfactory arrangements. If you need guidance negotiating your needs related to a religious holiday, the College Chaplain, Rev. Lyn Pace, ppace@emory.edu, Candler Hall 202, is willing and available to help.

***Please be aware that Rev. Pace is not tasked with excusing students from classes or writing excuses for students to take to their professors.*

Affirmative Action & Sexual Harassment

All persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by university policies. Discrimination against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, gender, sexual orientation, or veteran status is unacceptable.

Title IX Reporting

Every Emory employee who is informed about an allegation of sexual misconduct involving any student is required to notify a Title IX Coordinator either directly or through their relevant reporting structure. However, employees who serve in a professional role in which communications are afforded confidential status under the law (e.g., medical providers, therapists, and professional and pastoral counselors) are not bound by this requirement but may, consistent with their ethical and legal obligations, be required to report limited information about incidents without revealing the identities of the individuals involved, to a Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator. All members of the Emory community are encouraged to promptly report incidents of sexual harassment and discrimination.

For more information, visit: <http://sexualmisconductresources.emory.edu/policies/index.html>

Course Schedule (tentative):

W 1	T 1/15	Intro to the course; going over the syllabus
	Th 1/17	History of the Ancient Middle East http://www.essential-humanities.net/world-history/ancient-middle-east/

W 2	T 1/22	Ancient Near Eastern Literature, pp. 269-278 (posted on Canvas)
	Th. 1/24	Ancient Near Eastern Literature (cont.), pp. 278-287
W 3	T 1/29	<i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> : Read Intro and Tablets 1-5 http://www.uwosh.edu/home_pages/faculty_staff/minniear/2010/Pages/Epic%20of%20Gilgamesh.pdf
	Th. 1/31	<i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> (cont.): Read Tablets 6-11 http://www.uwosh.edu/home_pages/faculty_staff/minniear/2010/Pages/Epic%20of%20Gilgamesh.pdf
W 4	T 2/5	Religion in the Pre-Islamic Near East: Read pp. 1-18 http://catalogue.pearsoned.ca/assets/hip/ca/hip_ca_pearsonhighered/samplechapter/013814477X.pdf
	Th. 2/7	Religion in the Pre-Islamic Near East (cont.): Read pp. 18-31 http://catalogue.pearsoned.ca/assets/hip/ca/hip_ca_pearsonhighered/samplechapter/013814477X.pdf
W 5	T 2/12	Exam 1
	Th. 2/14	The Rise of Islam http://www.secthoughts.com/John%27s%20Papers/07th%20century.pdf
W 6	T 2/19	Class activity on “The Rise of Islam” http://mrgoetzclass.weebly.com/uploads/5/5/1/6/5516115/the_rise_of_islam_10b1.pdf
	Th. 2/21	A BRIEF TIMELINE OF EARLY ISLAMIC HISTORY http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/syllabi/r/reed/1JM8T-Rel212/timeline3.htm The Umayyad Caliphate/Dynasty https://islamichistory.org/the-umayyads/
W 7	T 2/26	The Abbasid Caliphate/Dynasty http://islamichistory.org/the-abbasid-caliphate/
	Th. 2/28	Islamic Golden Age http://islamichistory.org/islamic-golden-age/
W 8	T 3/5	Islamic Golden Age and Decline http://islamichistory.org/islamic-golden-age/
	Th. 3/7	Exam 2
W 9	3/11- 3/15	<i>No classes: Spring Break</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homework: Watch a documentary in class: “Rise and Decline of Science in Islam” https://topdocumentaryfilms.com/rise-decline-science-islam/

W 10	T 3/19	Imperialism in the Middle East & North Africa https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/imperialism-middle-east-and-north-africa
	Th. 3/21	European Colonialism and the Emergence of Modern Muslim States http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/book/islam-9780195107999/islam-9780195107999-chapter-13 Abstract for research paper due in class
W 11	T 3/26	The Arab Spring: Article 1: https://www.trinitydc.edu/magazine-2012/the-arab-spring-the-uprising-and-its-significance/ Article 2: http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/HistoryPStudies/PDF_Files/01_V-30-No1-Jun17.pdf Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch <i>The Square: The Egyptian Revolution behind the Headlines</i> (2013) (A Netflix documentary) • Read: “Women, Youth, and the Egyptian Arab Spring” https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10402659.2013.816557?needAccess=true
	Th. 3/28	Discussion of: <i>The Square: The Egyptian Revolution behind the Headlines</i> & “Women, Youth, and the Egyptian Arab Spring”
W 12	T 4/2	Forms of governance in the Middle East; <i>Readings TBA</i>
	Th. 4/4	Exam 3
W 13	T 4/9	Important literary works and figures from the Middle East & North Africa ; <i>Readings TBA</i>
	Th. 4/11	Islamic art and architecture; <i>Readings TBA</i>
W 14	T 4/1	Film industry in MENA; <i>Readings TBA</i>
	Th. 4/18	Music industry in MENA; <i>Readings TBA</i>
W 15	T 4/23	Cuisine and food culture; <i>Readings TBA</i>
	Th. 4/25	Conclusion of the course Research paper due in class