

History of the Modern Middle East

Professor: Laura Bier

Office: 309 Smith

Office Hours: Wed. 3:15-5:00 or by appointment

e-mail: laura.bier@hts.gatech.edu

The objective of this course is to provide a basis for understanding historical processes (both global and local) within the Middle East and North Africa in the modern period. Focusing on the transformation of state and society under the impact of a changing world economy and European imperialism, this course has four interrelated themes. The first is the transformation of multiethnic world empires in the sixteenth century to nation-states in the 20th century. Second, we trace the transformation of the Middle East economy, once a self-sustaining system at a central node of world trade, into a marginal economic region dubbed part of "the Third World." Third, we examine the currents of social change wrought by these political and economic transformations, focusing particularly on the rise of new social and political movements and the new sorts of identities, social categories and notions of personhood they were based upon. Fourth, we trace the changing relationship of the Middle East to Europe and later, the United States. At the heart of our discussions will be questions about the nature of the interrelationship between "East" and "West," Middle East exceptionalism and the political, contested nature of historical sources.

Required Texts:

William Cleveland: *History of the Modern Middle East*

James Gelvin: *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: 100 years of War*

Tayib Salih: *Seasons of Migration to the North*

Maryam Satrapi: *Persepolis*

Supplementary materials:

Other required readings are available on WebCT. These are indicated as an asterisk (*) on your syllabus.

Grading

Participation and attendance 20%

Map Quiz: 10%

Mid-term: 20%

Final: 30%

Book Reports: (On *Seasons of Migration to the North* and *Persepolis*): 20%

Attendance Policy: You are allowed three unexcused absences. For all other absences you must provide a written, official excuse, such as a note from a doctor or medical professional or the Dean of Students' office. For every unexcused absence after the third you will lose a letter grade from your participation.

Honor Code: Students in this class will be expected to abide by the Georgia Tech Honor Code and avoid any instance of academic misconduct, including but not limited to the substitution of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another individual or individuals; false claims of performance or work submitted by the student; possessing, using, or exchanging *improperly* acquired written or verbal information in preparation for, or in writing, an exam or paper. If you have any questions, please consult with me and read the Honor Code, which is available at: www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/Policy/code.in.sections.htm#AHC .

Book Reports

You are required to write two book reports for this class, one on *Seasons of Migration to the North* the other on *Persepolis*. They should be five pages, double spaced using 12 point font with one inch margins. Guidelines for the assignments are available on WebCT. **Note: These books are in addition to your regularly assigned classroom readings. Make sure you allow plenty of time to read them in order to complete the reports by their due date.**

Participation and Class Discussion

Participation is a significant part of your grade in this class. You are expected to come to class on time and prepared to contribute actively to class discussions and activities. This will not only significantly enhance your own learning experience but the experience of your fellow students. Because of the size of the class, discussions will primarily be done in small groups and will, in most cases, involve issues addressed by specific readings and videos. As part of your preparation for discussion you will be required to write **five** reaction papers, of approximately 250 words in length typed (3/4 of a page, double spaced) in response to questions which I will provide you with. These papers are graded on a pass/fail basis: they are intended to be informal and designed to give you an opportunity to reflect on particular historical sources within the context of the wider issues we'll be discussing in class. Note that there are seven class sessions (not five) listed on the syllabus in which a response paper is due. This means that you are allowed to "opt out" of two response papers. Which papers you chose to complete and which you chose to opt out of is up to you, so plan ahead and chose wisely.

Late Paper Policy

Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Papers submitted at the end of or after class on the due date will lose half a grade. Papers submitted the next day will lose a full grade. Another full grade will be taken off for ever subsequent day the paper is late. Response papers handed in after the due date will not be given credit.

Course Schedule and Readings

Introduction and Key Concepts

Jan. 9 (M): Course requirements

Jan. 11 (W): What is History?

*Khater: How to Read a Primary Source

Jan. 13 (F): What and Where is "the Middle East?"

Part I: Islam, Empire and Early Modern Society

Jan. 16 (M): MLK's Birthday: Class cancelled

Jan. 18 (W): The Rise and Development of Islamic Society

*Esposito, John:

Jan. 20 (F): Discussion: The Debate on Coffee

*Mattox, Ralph: Coffee and Coffeehouses

Response paper due

Jan. 23 (M) and Jan. 25 (W) The Gunpowder Empires: Ottoman and Safavid Rule

Cleveland: Chapter 3

*Quateart, Donald: Ottoman Society and Popular Culture

Jan. 27 (F) Discussion: Slavery in the Ottoman Empire

*Burke, Edmund: Shemisigul

Response paper due

Part II. Nineteenth Century Transformations: European Imperialism, Reform and Indigenous Responses

Jan. 30 (M) and Feb. 1(W) Imperialism, Reform and Defensive Developmentalism

Cleveland: Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7

*Orientalism

Feb. 3 (F) Discussion

*Al-Jabarti: "Napoleon in Egypt"

*Lord Cromer: "Modern Egypt"

Response paper due

Feb. 6 (M) Feb. 8 (W) Social Impact and Popular Reaction to Imperialism, Colonialism and Reform

Cleveland: Chapter 7

Gelvin: The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Chapters 1, 2

*Gelvin, James: "The Life of the Mind" and "Secularism and Modernity"

Feb. 10 (F) Discussion: The Nahda

Readings TBA

Response paper due

Feb. 13 (M) Constitutional Experiments in Iran and Turkey

Cleveland: Chapter 8

Map Quiz

Feb. 15 (W) Zionism and Jewish Settlement in Palestine

Gelvin: Chapter 3

Feb. 17 (F) World War I and the Post War Settlement
Cleveland: Chapter 9

Feb. 20 (M) **First paper due: *Seasons of Migration to the North***

Part III. Nationalism and State Building in the Interwar Period

Feb. 22 (W) and Feb. 24 (F) State Building by Decree and Revolution
Cleveland: Chapters 10-12

Feb. 27 (M) The Palestine Mandate and the Creation of Israel
Gelvin: 4,5,6

March 1 (W) Film: "al-Nakba: The Palestinian Catastrophe, 1948." (56 min) (VHS 9899)

March 3 (F) Discussion: Narratives of Partition
*Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel
Response paper due

March 6 (M) and 8 (W): Nationalism and the Rise of New Political Movements
Gelvin: Chapter 7
*Taha Hussein: The Future of Culture
*Hassan al-Bana: A Sunni Revivalist View of History
*Constitution of the Ba'ath Party

March 10 (F): In Class Activity: Nationalism and State Building

Part V: Decolonization and the Promises and Pitfalls of Arab Nationalism

March 13 (M) Egypt and the Era of Gamal Abdel Nasser: 1952-1970
Cleveland: Chapter 15

March 15 (W) The Cold War, Authoritarianism and the Radicalization of Politics
Cleveland: Chapter 14, Chapter 16

March 17 (F) **MIDTERM**

March 20-24: Spring Break: Class Cancelled! Enjoy!!

March 27 (M) and March, 29 (W): Decolonization: Algeria
Film: Battle for Algiers

March 31 (F): Discussion: Battle for Algiers
Response paper due

Part VI: Israel, Palestine and The Arabs

April 3 (M) The Arab-Israeli Conflict
Gelvin: Chapter 8

April 5 (W) Israel, Palestine and the Occupation from Uprising to Uprising
Gelvin: Chapter 9 and 10
*Elon, Amos: "The Insult and the Fury" and "The Finger of God"

April 7 (F) The Battle Over History: Zionism and the Revisionist Historians
Readings: TBA

Part VII: The Contemporary Era:

April 10 (M) State and Society in the Contemporary Middle East: Liberalization and
Authoritarianism
Cleveland: Chapters 18 and 19

April 12 (W) Oil
Cleveland: Chapter 21

April 14 (F) The Iranian Revolution
Cleveland Chapter 20

April 17 (M) **Book Report on *Persepolis* Due**

April 19 (W) Islamism
*Hirschkind: What is Political Islam?

April 21 (F) Film: Egypt: A Veiled Revolution

April 24 (M) The US and the Middle East: From Cold War to the War on Terror

April 26 (W) Discussion: Civilization and Its Discontents: Framing the War on Terror
*Huntington: Clash of Civilizations
*Edward Said: The Clash of Ignorance
Response paper due

April 28 (F) Film: About Baghdad

May 2: Final Exam