

HISTORY OF THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST

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OFFICE HOURS: M, 10-11 & TH, 12:45-2:05

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course charts the emergence of the modern Middle East during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The political history of the states that constitute the Middle East is an essential part of this story. But the story of the modern Middle East is about much more than that. It is about the transformation of frameworks through which individuals and communities experience and make sense of the world around them. For our purposes, this includes history, conceptions of community, economic activity, and religion. We will guide our exploration of these broad themes with a set of more pointed questions: How did the nation (and national citizenship) become an organizing principle for collective life? How did capitalism take root? How and why did secularism become a question of urgent concern? How and for whom did modernity itself become an issue of very self-conscious concern? In answering these questions, we will explore the contestations, negotiations, and exclusions that characterize the emergence of modern forms of government in the Middle East, thus gaining insight into many of the most pressing issues in the region today.

COURSE TEXTS AND LEARNING GOALS:

Elliott Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Robert Tignor and Shmuel Moreh, *Al-Jabarti's Chronicle of the French Occupation*. New York: Marcus Wiener, 2005.

Keith Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

These texts form the backbone of our course, but throughout the semester we will be working with relevant primary documents whenever possible. The Al-Jabarti aside, these secondary sources (along with those on reserve) are scholarly treatments of general themes or particular elements of the history of the modern Middle East. As you complete the reading for each secondary text, please always read for argument. You can do so with a few questions in mind:

- Can you identify a sentence or sentences that constitute the thesis statement?
- Can you state the author's thesis – even regarding a single chapter or article – succinctly in your own words?
- If part of a larger work, how does a particular chapter fit into the bigger picture? If a stand-alone piece, can you relate this reading to another that we have completed in the course?
- Can you identify at least two examples the author uses to support their argument?
- How is the author defining (implicitly or explicitly) “modern?” How does this affect the author's argument and analysis?

As you read the primary documents with which we will work, please keep the following questions in mind:

- Who is writing? What do you think was their purpose in so doing?
- What is the larger relevant context? (Beware of anachronistic analysis!)
- What is the author's relative position of power in the context of the document's production?
- How does this document support or call into question claims made by the authors of our secondary sources?

From a skill-building perspective, then, **the first and second learning goals** of this course are (1) reading scholarly sources for argument and presenting that argument and exemplary evidence in succinct terms and (2) cultivating the ability to offer contextually sensitive readings of primary source documents.

COURSE G

your name, the course name and, if you choose, a title. All papers should be double-sided and should have page numbers.

Participation: 20%

As the weighty percentage indicates, I consider your participation in this course to be an essential component of its success. Participation includes regular attendance. In this vein, anything beyond two unexcused absences will result in a reduction of your participation

There are two “due dates” for the map and chronology, and my evaluation of your work at these points will constitute 10% of your final grade (20% total). As an incentive for steady work, at 5 p.m. each Sunday I will randomly select four maps/chronologies for review, making it possible for me to review each project twice (outside the official due dates) over the course of the semester. These “surprise reviews” will constitute 5% of your final grade.

Final Paper: 15%

The final paper will build on your map and timeline project and will require you to draw from class resources as well as from resources that you identify during a research process. The final paper will be 8-10 pages in length.

Course Policies:

- I will return your e-mail within 24 hours whenever possible. If you have questions about finding material, etc., you can always check with a colleague first (to likely receive a more immediate response).
- I will accept *only* hard copies of written work (unless otherwise noted). All work is due in class. I do not want to hear excuses about printing problems. You are responsible for planning your time in such a way that you can turn your work in on time.
- Know that I am pre-disposed to saying no to requests for extensions. I provide plenty of notice for each of the assignments – it is your responsibility to plan your time accordingly. That said, please do not be shy about approaching me for an extension if you have extenuating circumstances. It is essential to keep lines of communication open.
- If I suspect that you are using computers in class for anything other than note taking or document viewing, you will lose your computer privileges for the remainder of the semester. (If I suspect that you are texting in class I will ask that you leave your phone with me at the start of each class. Cell phones should be set on silent.)
- If you are involved in an extra-curricular activity that will take you away from campus be sure to let me know beforehand. Regardless of the reason (except for dire family emergency, hospitalization), if I do not hear from you *before* you miss class I will assume you are simply skipping class. An after-the-fact note from Health Services will not suffice.
- Breaches of academic integrity will result in an official disciplinary process guided by the Dean’s office. Although I will inform you of any action I take, I will not negotiate with you privately about such matters. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism I suggest you consult the Student Handbook immediately.
- It is essential to me that everyone in the class has the same opportunity to thrive. Please let me know of any particular learning needs you have (assuming they are on file with the college) and we will work together to make sure that you get the most out of this learning experience.



**February 6:** Becoming Modern (cont.)?

- James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, pp. 133-142.
- August Comte, *Introduction to Positive Philosophy*, pp. vii-xii and 1-35 (pweb).

**February 11:** Economy and Class

- Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts*, pp. 1-18, 54-79.  
Amin, “Economic Change under Muhammad ‘Ali” (pweb).  
Amin, “Observing Muhammad ‘Ali Pa!a” (pweb).

**February 13:** Economy and Class (cont.)

- Zachary Lockman, “Imagining the Working Class” (R).  
Amin, “Tahtawi and Justice” (pweb).

**February 18:** Economy and Class (cont.)

- Keith Watenpugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East*, pp. 1-54.  
“Commercial Convention,” Gelvin, pp. 147-148.

**February 20:** Economy and Class (cont.)

- Keith Watenpugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East*, pp. 55-94.  
“Young Turk Proclamation, 1908” (pweb).

**February 25:** Economy and Class (cont.)

- Keith Watenpugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East*, pp. 95-120.

**February 27:** Emergent Nationalism

- Elliot Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities*, pp. 1-15, 72-115.

**March 4:** Emergent Nationalism (cont.)

- Elliot Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities*, pp. 121-171.  
Mustafa Kamil, “What the National Party Wants” (pweb).

## DELIMITATION OF THE MODERN NATIONAL STATE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

### **March 6:** National State Formation

- **James Clew** *The Modern Middle East*, pp. 180-183, 208-216.

**April 10:** Religion and National Life (cont.)



**April 29:** The Middle East and Global Capitalism

- James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, pp. 256-282.
- Timothy Mitchell, “McJihad” (R).

**May 1:** Iraq in Contexts

- **Final maps and chronology due**
- James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, pp. 266-282.
- Walker, “The Making of Modern Iraq” (R).
- Visser, “Other People’s Maps” (R).

**May 6:** Wrap up

**May 8:** Work day