

HIST 312

From Ottoman to Isis: Politics & Culture in the 20th Century Middle East

Instructor: Dr. Noor Zaidi

Office Hours:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce students to the major trends and significant events in the history of the modern Middle East, with particular attention to themes of colonialism, nationalism, sectarianism, the impact of oil on the region, Western ambitions, and the rise of political Islam(s). The course will begin with an overview of the circumstances that changed the political boundaries of the Middle East in the early twentieth century – the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of the Mandate system (including the Palestine mandate) – with an eye to how those changes have continued to shape current crises of the region. We will then address the establishment of Israel and the Arab-Israeli wars and the age of revolution and nationalism in the Middle East. Next, we will focus on the failure of secular nationalist movements and the rise of political Islam, culminating in the Iranian Revolution and the mujahideen in Afghanistan. The fourth section explores the links between the rise of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf War and Palestinian Intifada, and Al Qaeda. The final weeks of the course will address the more contemporary events that have unfolded in the twenty-first century, ending with discussions of the “Arab Spring,” the ongoing war in Syria, and the rise of ISIS.

While the content of this course is driven by major political and military struggles, we will also use film and literature to explore the complexity of life on the ground, as ordinary people and intellectual leaders alike struggle with their changing circumstances.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to -

- Identify key themes that have shaped modern Middle East history
- Discuss changes (and permanence) of borders in the region and how we can discuss current conflicts in relation
- Trace the evolution of “political Islam” and discuss to what degree religion really plays a role in ‘religious’ confluct
- Evaluate the role of “the West” and its impact in the 20th century Middle East
- Analyze a range of primary sources, from speeches to novels, to get a better understanding of life on the ground as events unfolded

REQUIRED TEXTS

William L. Cleveland and Martin Bunton, eds. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2012.

Akram Fouad Khater. *Sources in the History of the Modern Middle East*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 2010.
Marjane Satrapi. *Persepolis*. New York: Pantheon Graphic Novels, 2004.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

George Crile. *Charlie Wilson's War: The Extraordinary Story of How the Wildest Man in Congress and a Rogue CIA Agent Changed the History of Our Times*. New York: Grove Press, 2007.
Lawrence Wright. *The Looming Tower: Al Qaeda's Road to 9/11*. New York: Vintage Publishing, 2007.

COURSE EVALUATION

Grade Distribution:

Attendance, Participation, and Journals	20%
Mid-term exam	25% [to be given in class]
Paper	25%
Final Paper/Exam	30%

COURSE POLICIES

Students are required to participate in every lecture. Please keep in mind that lectures do not duplicate the readings, but rather supplement them. In addition, students are expected to have completed readings and participate actively.

Students will post a short weekly journal on the course Blackboard (BB) site, of approximately 250 words. Students will be asked to post **TWO QUESTIONS** in their journals, based on the readings. These questions should be thematic questions – ie not questions of fact, but questions that engage the themes of the course and other readings. Journals are due **by XXXX each week.**

Extensions are not routinely granted. Without prior approval, late papers will be subject to daily ten-point penalty deduction. To secure prior approval, please bring legitimate and documented explanations.

Other requirements include satisfactory performance on a midterm exam, a paper assignment, and a take-home final.

ATTENDANCE

The lectures, readings, and discussion for this course are meant to supplement each other. Therefore, failure to attend classes will result in deductions from the final course grade.

PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Participation for this course means ACTIVE participation in class and engagement with the readings. Please come to class on time and ready to engage in discussion on the lectures, readings, and clips (where relevant). Students will be expected to connect readings to earlier assignments and major course themes.

Participation grade includes the submission and quality of journal entries.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/PLAGIARISM

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal.

In addition, please note:

The penalty for academic dishonesty –including plagiarism and other forms of cheating-- in any UMBC History Department course is an "F" for the course. In addition, cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Conduct Committee. For further definitions on what academic misconduct is and how to avoid it at all costs please

See: <http://library.acadiau.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/>

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

The use of computers is permitted for lectures, but please be respectful of your fellow students – and me – and pay attention in class. We will cover a good amount of material, and distractions on the laptop will make it more challenging to keep up with the material.

During videos and certain discussion periods, laptops will be put away.

This course will also cover some material that might feel deeply personal or politically charged. I know we all bring our own background knowledge and experiences to this course, but ask that you come to class and approach the readings with an open mind. I promise I want to hear your opinions, and in turn I hope you let yourself be challenged by new perspectives.

STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES (SDS)

UMBC is committed to eliminating discriminatory obstacles that may disadvantage students based on disability. Services for students with disabilities are provided for all students qualified under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the ADA of 2009, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act who request and are eligible for accommodations. The Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) is the UMBC

department designated to coordinate accommodations that would allow students to have equal access and inclusion in all courses, programs, and activities at the University.

If you have a documented disability and need to request academic accommodations, please refer to the SDS website at sds.umbc.edu for registration information and to begin the process, or alternatively you may visit the SDS office in the Math/Psychology Building, Room 212. For questions or concerns, you may contact us through email at disAbility@umbc.edu or phone (410) 455-2459.

If you require accommodations for this class, make an appointment to meet with me to discuss your SDS-approved accommodations.

COURSE SCHEDULE

*Please note: this syllabus is subject to minor changes.
Check Blackboard regularly for updates*

Week 1: What is the ‘Modern Middle East,’ and where is it?

Think about: What do we mean when we say “the Middle East”? How should we think about and define this region?

What was the situation in the Ottoman Empire leading up to our period of study?

Session 1:

Rashid Khalidi, “The ‘Middle East’ as a Framework of Analysis: Re-Mapping a Region in the Era of Globalization.” Available online:

<http://novact.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/The-%E2%80%98Middle-East%E2%80%99-as-a-framework-for-analysis-Remapping-a-region-in-the-era-of-Globalization-Rashid-Khalidi.pdf>

Khater, Sources in History of the Modern Middle East, “How to Read a Primary Source,” pg. 1-6

Session 2:

Cleveland & Bunton, History of the Modern Middle East, Chapter 4, pg. 80-102.

Khater, Sources in History of the Modern Middle East

1. The Hatt-i-Serif Decree Initiates the Tanzimat, or Reform, Period in the Ottoman Empire, pg. 11-13
2. An Ottoman Government Decree Defines the Official Notion of the “Modern Citizen”, pg. 14-16
3. Jamal al-Din al-Afghani Answers Ernest Renan’s Criticism of Islam, May 18, 1883, pg. 25-30
4. Rifa’a Tahtawi Reflects on Paris, its People, their Ideas, and their Lives, pg. 58-60

Week 2: A Changing World - Egyptian Dynamism, the End of Empire, and the New Woman

Think about: What makes Egypt unique within the Ottoman experience? What are some of the dramatic transformations that were taking place across 'the Middle East'? How are women's 'rights' defined in this period? What role does Islam play in that?

Session 1:

Cleveland & Bunton, chapter 5 & "England on the Nile" of Chapter 6, pg. 104 - 140

Khater, Sources in History

1. Qasim Amin Argues for the Emancipation of Women in Egypt, 1900, pg. 61-64
2. Articles in Iranian Magazines Emphasize the Link Between the Education of Girls and the Advancement of Iranian Society, pg. 71-73

Session 2:

Huda Shaarawi, Harem Years, pg. 23-30, 53-70

Qasim Amin, The New Woman pg. 119-146

Week 3: "Lines Drawn on a Map" – the Post-WWI settlements

Think about: What are the reasons given for the division of the Ottoman Empire? How do the borders correspond to realities on the ground? Whose claims were/were not acknowledged and why?

What would it mean to be a subject of the Ottoman Empire experiencing these changes? Would political movements were vying for support?

Session 1:

Cleveland & Bunton, chapters 11-12, pg 185-225

"A Century On: Why Arabs resent Sykes-Picot." Available online:

<http://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2016/sykes-picot-100-years-middle-east-map/>

Session 2:

Khater, Sources in History

1. The Husayn-McMahon Correspondence Negotiating Arab Kingdom in Middle East, 1915, pg. 104-106
2. The Balfour Declaration, Stating the British Government's Support for a Jewish Homeland in Palestine, and Discussions Leading to Issuing It in 1917, pg. 107-111
3. The Zionist Organization's Memorandum to the Peace Conference in Versailles Asks for Support for the Establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, February 3, 1919, pg. 150-157
4. American King-Crane Commission -- Popular Ideas of Nationalism in the Middle East, 1919, pg. 160-166

5. The Resolution of the General Syrian Congress at Damascus Proclaims Arab Sovereignty over Greater Syria, July 2, 1919, pg. 158-159
6. Division of the Ottoman Empire: The Treaty of Sèvres, August 10, 1920, pg. 112-117

Week 4: Europe and the Middle East, Zionism and Palestine

Think about: What are the roots of the Zionist movement? What were their goals? How did these goals conflict with realities on the ground or the goals of other relevant parties?

How did immigration to the Palestine Mandate evolve through till 1948? How did policies toward the establishment of a “Jewish national homeland” change, and why does this matter for the current conflict?

Session 1:

Cleveland and Bunton, chapter 13, pg. 226-256

Session 2:

Khater, Sources in History of Middle East

1. President Harry Truman's Statement Supporting Jewish Immigration into Palestine, October 4, 1946, pg. 190-192
2. The Arab Case for Palestine and the Case for a Binational State, March 1946, pg. 179-189

“White Paper of 1939,” Available:

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/brwh1939.asp

[BB] Avi Shlaim, “The Debate About 1948,” 287- 304

Week 5: New ‘Nations,’ Old Histories: The Middle East in the Age of Nationalism

Think about: Why do we think of this as the “age of nationalism”? To what extent did Gamal Abd al-Nasser define this era? What were the promises and challenges that Arab states faced in their new independence?

How would ordinary citizens experience the change from being Ottoman subjects to citizens of national states? Could you belong to more than one ‘nation’?

Session 1:

Cleveland & Bunton, Chapter 15 and 16, pp. 286-327

Session 2:

[BB] Sami Michael, The Refuge (novella), pp. 135-145

[BB] Joel Beinin, The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry, ch. 3, pg. 110-132

Week 6: The Middle East in the Age of Nationalism, PART 2

Think about: How should we assess the age of Nasser? What are its failures and its lasting legacies? How important do the borders drawn on a map just decades earlier become in this period? Can we talk about the “Arab world” after Nasser?

Session 1:

Cleveland & Bunton, Chapter 14, pg 261-285

[BB] T. R. McHale, “A Prospect of Saudi Arabia,” pp. 622-640 (not the whole article)

Session 2:

[BB] James Jankowski, “The Breakup of the United Arab Republic,” in Nasser’s Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic, 161-178

Primer on Palestine, Israel, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, sections 7-12

Available: <http://www.merip.org/primer-palestine-israel-arab-israeli-conflict-new#The June 1967 War>

Khater, *Sources in History of Middle East*:

1. Egyptian President Nasser Resigns from Office, 1967, pg. 220-224
2. Sadiq al-‘Azm, an Arab Intellectual, critiques the Arab State and Clergy, pg. 225-228

Week 7: Political Islam(s): The New Way Forward?

Think about: Why do Islamic political movements become popular in this era? What are the roots of these movements, both in the leaders and in their popular support? Why does Islam become an alternative solution for people? How religious are these movements? What would be appealing about these ideas?

Session 1:

[BB] James Gelvin, The Modern Middle East, Chapter 20, pg 290-299

Khater, Sources in History

1. Hasan al-Banna Proclaims Egyptian Nationalism and the Religious Basis for an Islamic State, 1949, pg. 136-141
2. Egyptian Writer Sayyid Qutb Articulates a New, Influential Vision of Jihad, 1967, pg. 269-277
3. The Massacre of the Muslim Brothers of Syria in Hama, 1982, pg. 245-248

Session 2:

[BB] Sayyid Qutb, Milestones, pg. 11-30

[BB] Hasan al-Banna, Peace in Islam (excerpts: Introduction, Reformist Feeling in the Islamic World, Peace and Why Fighting is Allowed in Islam), pg. 2-7, 12-15, 25-37

Week 8: The Lebanese Civil War and the Rise of “Shi’a Consciousness”

Think about: Who are the various sides in this conflict, and why does the conflict last for so many years? Is the Lebanese Civil War the failure of nationalism? What does it tell us about multi-religious or multi-ethnic states in the Middle East? What kind of political system works best?

What role does Shi’a Islam play in the civil war and how does Hezbollah emerge from this?

Session 1:

Cleveland & Bunton, “The Lebanese Civil War,” in Chapter 19, pg 389-398

MERIP Primer, “Lebanon’s 15-year War: 1975-90,” pg. 23-25. Available: <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer162/primer-lebanons-15-year-war-1975-1990>

Khater, Sources in History of Middle East

1. Documents About One of the Major Political Arguments Underlying the Lebanese Civil War, 1975, pg. 232-241

Session 2:

[BB] Fouad Ajami, The Vanished Imam, pg. 89-122

Lara Deeb, “Hezbollah: A Primer,” Available: <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero073106>, pg. 26-35

Week 9: “Islamic” Revolutions, “Islamic” Resistance: the case of Iran

Think about: What are the roots of the Iranian Revolution? What factors and policies played a role? What are the ideas that drive the revolution? How religious is the Iranian revolution / is this a religious revolution? What would life on the ground be like for those living through the Shah of Iran’s reign through Ayatollah Khomeini’s rule? How central is Shi’a Islam to the revolution and what does that tell us about identity/nationalism ?

Session 1

Cleveland & Bunton, Chapter 18, pg 355-376

[BB] Gelvin, The Modern Middle East, p. 317 (“Shariati) – 320 (“Khomeini”)

Khater, Sources in History of Middle East

1. Iranian Intellectual Ali Shari’ati Examines Man From the Viewpoint of Islam, pg. 278-285
2. Asadollah Alam’s Diary Details Some Elements of the Shah of Iran’s Rule in 1976 and 1977, pg. 200-207
3. Ayatollah Khomeini Denounces the Rule of the Shah, pg. 229-231

4. American Consular Documents Reveal US Diplomats' Assessment of Revolution in Iran, 1978, pg. 241-244

Ali Shari'ati, "Red Shi'ism vs. Black Shi'ism," Available:
http://www.iranchamber.com/personalities/ashariati/works/red_black_shiism.php

"The Khomeini Era Begins," TIME Magazine, 12 February 1979 (2 pgs)

Session 2:

Marjane Satrapi, Persepolis (graphic novel)

Week 10: Afghanistan: the Unwinnable War

Think about: Why does Afghanistan become so important? What drives American involvement in the war and how would you assess US policy in the war?

George Crile, Charlie Wilson's War, pg. 112-156, 229-240, 359-270

Week 11: Upheaval and Entrenchment: *Intifada*, the Gulf War, and the Kingdom of Saud

Think about: How does the Palestinian cause become linked to the broader conflicts across the Middle East in the 1990s? What is America's role in the Middle East in this period? How does the US – Saudi Arabia alliance develop and what role does that have in events to come?

Session 1:

Cleveland & Bunton, Chapter 22, pg 451-473

Session 2:

[BB] Ussama Makdisi, "Anti-Americanism" in the Arab World: An Interpretation of a Brief History," pp. 538-557

Khater, Sources in History of Middle East

1. Islamist Usama Bin Laden Calls on Muslims to Take Up Arms Against America, 1998, pg. 293 – 299

Scott Shane, "Saudis and Extremism: 'Both the Arsonists and the Firefighters,'" *New York Times*, available:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/26/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-islam.html>

Week 12: Al Qaeda

Think about: What are the roots of Al Qaeda? Who are these men, and what have their experiences in the Middle East been in the last few decades? Why do they form Al Qaeda and what are their goals? How do they explain Islam and why Islam justifies their actions? How did we come to 9/11?

Excerpts, Lawrence Wright, The Looming Tower: Al Qaeda's Road to 9/11
Pgs: 26-55; 61-65; 74-80; 84-100; 127-137; 149-152; 155-161; 169-175; 207-210; 213-219; 232-236; 259-261; 301 -314

Week 13: Iraq

Think about: What was the situation in Iraq under Saddam Hussein? What was Iraqi nationalism? What role did American foreign policy play in Iraq before 9/11? Assess the American invasion of Iraq and the resulting political and religious conflicts that have emerged. Is there such a thing as 'Iraq' and should there be?

Session 1:

[BB] Charles Tripp, History of Iraq, Ch. 6-7, pg 186-316

Session 2:

Joe Biden, "Unity Through Autonomy in Iraq," Available:

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/01/opinion/01biden.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

Sara Pursley, "Lines Drawn on an Empty Map': Iraq's Borders and the Legend of the Artificial State" (2 parts), *Jadaliyya*, 2 & 3 June 2015

(www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/21759 and www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/21780)

[BB] Vali Nasr, "Iraq: The First Arab Shi'a State," The Shi'a Revival, chapter 7, pg. 169-189

Juan Cole, "After ISIL, is there any hope of Iraqi National Unity?" Available:

<http://www.juancole.com/2016/11/after-there-national.html>

Week 14: An Arab "Spring"?

Think about: Looking at the history we have learned, what are the roots of the Arab revolutions? Are these democratic movements? What are their goals? Why do we think of it as the Arab "spring"?

[BB] Council on Foreign Relations, The New Arab Revolt, What Happened, What It Means and What Comes Next (selection)

Madawi Al-Rasheed, "Sectarianism as Counter-Revolution: Saudi Responses to the Arab Spring," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* (11:3, 2011)

"Syria: An Interview with Samer Abboud," *Jadaliyya*, Available:

http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/23444/syria_an-interview-with-samer-abboud

Bassam Haddad, "Syria's Stalemate: The Limits of Regime Resilience," Available:

<http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/syrias-stalemate-limits-regime-resilience> [excerpts]

Watch clips: Jehane Noujaim, *The Square* (2013) [Film]

*****Final Examination Take Home Essay Questions Given*****

Week 15: “A Clash of Civilizations”?

Think about: Are the conflicts we see in the Middle East inevitable? What explains the current state of affairs in the Middle East, and are we in a clash of civilizations with Islam? What explains the popularity of this theory, and what do you think of it? What are the roots of ISIS? How religious is ISIS? What is the way forward for America and the Middle East? WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PAST, WITH “HISTORY” IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

Edward Said, “The Clash of Ignorance,” *The Nation*, Available:
<https://www.thenation.com/article/clash-ignorance/>

Elif Batuman, “Ottomania: A hit TV show reimagines Turkey’s imperial past”
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/02/17/ottomania>

Graeme Wood, “What ISIS Really Wants,” *The Atlantic*, Available:
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>

Nick Danforth, “There is No al-Sham,” *Foreign Policy*, Available:
<http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/06/17/there-is-no-al-sham/>

Watch: “Why is ISIL Targetting Turkey?” *Al Jazeera English*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sk5ySl6cX6Y&feature=youtu.be>

Susanne Koelbl, Samiha Shafy, Bernhard Zand, “Saudia Arabia and Iran: The Cold War of Islam,” *Spiegel Online*, Available:
<http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/saudia-arabia-iran-and-the-new-middle-eastern-cold-war-a-1090725.html>

Mohammad Javad Zarif, “Let Us Rid the World of Wahhabism,” Available:
<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/14/opinion/mohammad-javad-zarif-let-us-rid-the-world-of-wahhabism.html>