U.C. Berkeley, History 109C
The Middle East from the 18th Century to the Present

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Summer 2014: July 7-August 14
Monday-Thursday 10am-noon
Location: 234 Dwinelle
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Description: From Iran to the “Arab Spring,” Iraq to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Syrian civil war, news from the Middle East is a constant feature of our media landscape. But daily reporting substitutes concision and simplification for context and depth. Thus, this course intends to help students place these events in historical perspective by exploring the intertwining stories of the people, nations and interests that define the region.

This undergraduate seminar will examine the history of the Middle East from the late Ottoman period to the present. It will allow students to trace the breaking of pre-modern empires and the formation of nation states in the Arab world, Turkey, and Iran. It will also explore the changing role of Islam and nationalism in the Middle East, the colonial legacy, the establishment of the state of Israel, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Cold War, the politics of the Persian Gulf, the effect of American hegemony, and, finally, the “Arab Spring.” Each week will cover a theme; within the week, each class will further narrow our focus.

This course will help students broaden their regional knowledge, but it will also emphasize the importance of close reading of primary texts, clear writing and forceful argumentation. To that end, it is meant to provide students with tools to take their learning out of the classroom. Moreover, the course is intended to help imbue students with a sense of how history animates the present, lend substance to the stories behind the headlines and encourage original thinking about the world around us.

Requirements: This seminar-based course relies heavily on the readings and student participation to drive it forward. Thus, students must attend all seminars, complete all assigned readings and participate in class discussions. In addition, students are required to answer the study questions distributed in class and come to each session prepared to stake out and defend arguments pertaining to the course material.

The quality of the experience depends heavily on your participation. The readings must not merely be completed, but must be carried out in a particular way. Students should read actively, interrogate the arguments made in the texts and use them to understand the primary sources introduced in class. If you cannot attend a class for a legitimate reason, please email me ahead of time. If you are ill or have responsibilities that might bear on your performance, please email me or talk to me after class.

The midterm and final will each consist of an analysis of a primary source (20 percent), short identifications (20 percent) and two short essays (60 percent total). The term’s lone essay must be 1,500 words, including footnotes. The midterm and essay must be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of the seminar in which they are due. Late assignments will incur penalties.
Grading:
- Class attendance and participation (20%)
- Primary source analysis** (details below) (15%)
- Take-home midterm due at the start of Week 4 (20%)
- 1,500-word essay due at start of Week 5 (topics distributed in class) (20%)
- Final exam (25%).

Required readings. The books listed below are recommended for purchase or through shared copies at the university library.

Class meetings and associated readings:

Week 1 (July 7-10): Introduction and the Ottoman Era
Class 1: Orientation: Placing the Middle East

Class 2: Historical background: Islam, the Ottomans and the Arab World to 1800.
Readings: Quataert, The Ottoman Empire, chapters 1, 2 and 3.
Primary source: “Draft Treaty of Amity and Commerce between Ottoman Empire and France,” February 1535, in Gelvin, Modern Middle East, 60-61.

Class 3: Structure of the Ottoman Empire: Internal and External Relations
Readings: Quataert, The Ottoman Empire, chapters 4, 5 and 6.
- Gelvin, Modern Middle East, chapter 4.

Class 4: Iran: Qajars to the Constitutional Revolution
Readings: Axworthy, Iran, chapters 5 and 6.
- Gelvin, Modern Middle East, chapters 5 (excerpt: 82-87) and 10.
Primary sources: “The d’Arcy Oil Concession,” 1901, in Gelvin, Modern Middle East, 154.
- “The Supplementary Fundamental Law of 7 October 1907,” in Gelvin, Modern Middle East, 164-167.
Week 2 (July 14-17): Reform and the European Encounter

Class 5: Attempts at Ottoman Reform to 1914

**Readings:** Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, chapters 5 (excerpt: 73-82), 7 (including photo essay) and 9.
- Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, chapters 7 and 8.

**Primary sources:**
- Rifa’a Rifi’ al-Tahtawi, “The Extraction of Gold or an Overview of Paris,” in Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 160-161

Class 6: Imperialism

- Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, chapter 9.

**Primary sources:**
- “The Anglo-Russian Entente, 1907,” online: [http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The_Anglo-Russian_Entente](http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The_Anglo-Russian_Entente)

Class 7: The Early 20th Century and the effect of the ‘Great War’

- Ellen L. Fleischman, “The Other ‘Awakening’: The Emergence of Women’s Movements in the Modern Middle East, 1900-1940,” in *Social History of Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East*.

**Primary sources:**

Class 8: The Mandate Period

**Readings:** - Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, chapters 11 and 12.
- Quataert, *Ottoman Empire*, chapter 10.
- Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 76-80, 116-128.

**Primary sources:**

Week 3 (July 21-24): The Arab-Israeli Conflict

Class 9: Zionism, the Rise of Israel and Palestinian Nationalism

**Readings:** Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, chapters 14 and 18.
Class 10: Cycle of Conflict: Suez Crisis, the 1967 War and the 1973 War  

Class 11: From Egypt-Israel Peace to the Second Palestinian Intifada  

Class 12: Lebanon’s Civil War, 1975-1990  

Week 4 (July 28-31): The Cold War in the Middle East  
Class 13: Arab Nationalism  
***Take-home midterm exam due***  

**Primary sources:**

**Class 14:** The Immediate Postwar Period

**Readings:**

**Primary sources:**
- “Truman Doctrine,” March 12, 1947, online: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/trudoc.asp
- Document 3, “Department of State Airgram from Dean Acheson [Anti-Americanism in the Arab World], May 1, 1950. NARA, RG 59, Records of the Department of State, Decimal Files, 1950-1954. Online: http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB78/docs.htm

**Class 15:** Egypt, Nasserism and the rise of pan-Arabism

**Readings:**

**Primary sources:**

**Class 16:** Middle East as Battleground: Afghanistan, Algeria, Yemen and Beyond

**Readings:**

**Primary sources:**
-“Soviet Short-Term Options in South Asia,” U.S. National Intelligence Estimate, January 5, 1982 (excerpts: pp. 3-4, 6-7).

**Week 5 (August 4-7): The Security and Politics of the Persian Gulf**

**Class 17:** The Saudi Kingdom and Petro-Politics

***1,500-word essay due***

**Readings:** Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, chapter 16.


**Class 18:** Iran: Nationalism and the 1953 Coup

**Readings:** Axworthy, *Iran*, chapter 7 (excerpt: 221-239).

**Primary sources:** Memorandum for Discussion, “Iran,” circa November 1952. President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers, online: [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/iran/documents/index.php?documentid=6-12&page=1&cid=43](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/iran/documents/index.php?documentid=6-12&page=1&cid=43)
- Document 2: CIA, Summary, “Campaign to Install a Pro-Western Government in Iran,” draft of internal history of the coup, undated. Online: [http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB435/](http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB435/)

**Class 19:** Iran under the Shah

**Readings:** Axworthy, *Iran*, chapter 7 (excerpt: 239-256).

- “Follow-up on the President’s Talk with the Shah of Iran,” Memorandum from Henry Kissinger to Secretaries of State and Defense, July 25, 1972, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 21, online: [http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB21/](http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB21/)

**Class 20:** Iran: Revolution and the Islamic Republic

**Readings:** Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, chapter 19.
- Axworthy, *Iran*, chapter 7 (excerpt: 256-258) and chapter 8.

**Primary sources:** Ali Shariati, “The Philosophy of History: The Story of Cain and Abel,” in Gelvin, Modern Middle East, 317.

**Week 6 (August 11-14): U.S., the Middle East and the Arab Spring, 1990-present**

**Class 21:** The Rise (and Rise?) of Political Islam

**Readings:** Gelvin, Modern Middle East, chapters 17 and 20.

**Primary sources:** Muhammad ‘Abduh: “The Theology of Unity,” in Gelvin, Modern Middle East, 161-162.
-Sayyid Qutb, “Milestones,” in Gelvin, Modern Middle East, 315.

**Class 22:** Gulf Wars I and II


**Class 23:** The Arab Spring and Beyond


**Class 24:** ***Final exam***
**Primary document analysis**

**Instructions**
Throughout this term we will be examining excerpts from historical sources that you will be asked to comment on. At least one primary document has been chosen for each class, specific to that topic. From the end of Week 1, I will give students the opportunity to choose a seminar topic from the remainder of the term. Each student will then be asked to comment on the assigned excerpt during the seminar in question as part of their presentation for the term. In this exercise, students will need to comment on the context, content, and significance of the particular document. These analyses must contain all three elements:

1. **Context.** Consider who said or wrote what is in the excerpt, and what was their position? Who was their audience? What is the historical context and how is it relevant to the excerpt? How does it relate to a particular historical debate? What specific situation or issue was the speaker or writer concerned with? Why was that significant? What was the outcome? Students must be prepared to provide enough background material to put the excerpt in context.

2. **Content.** This is critical. Presentations that merely provide general background and make broad points about the excerpt will be insufficient. Instead, students must discuss the particular significance of the excerpt. Students must interpret, amplify and criticize the excerpt in order to highlight the significance of the content. Additionally, it can sometimes be significant to highlight what is not being said.

Students should be balanced in their approach. They should, a) give the speaker or writer a fair hearing and explain what they say, but b) also criticize what they say, so as to show their perception, dishonesty, vanity, simplification of issues, vagueness, ambiguity, inhumanity, etc.

3. **Significance.** Always try to show how the excerpt is important to historians: which historical arguments does it undermine or reinforce? Or could it be used by both sides in an historical debate for different purposes? To do this you need to show an appreciation of the uses of particular types of historical evidence. There are many types of historical evidence, and all are likely to reveal different types of information and be of varying value in historical debate.